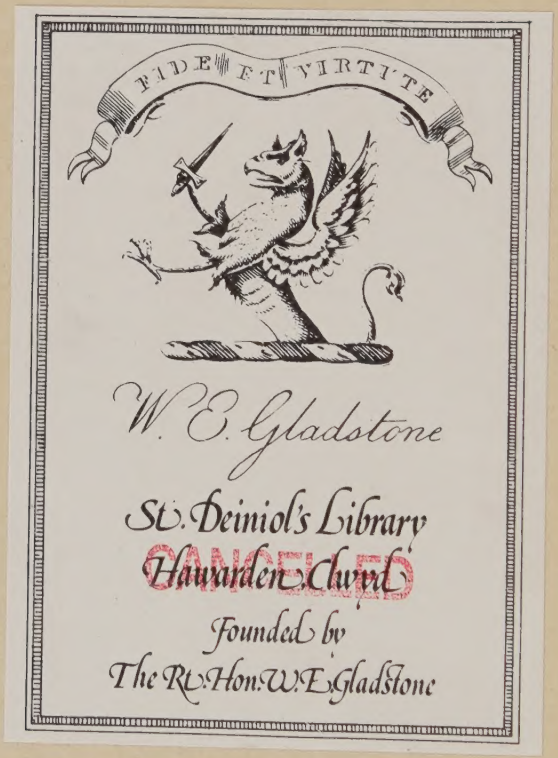
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PANTHEISM AND THE VALUE OF LIFE

WITH

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

BY

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TO

MY WIFE

0154

PREFACE

This volume represents a slightly condensed form of a thesis originally presented to the University of Aberdeen for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and accepted by that University as qualifying for the degree. I should esteem it a favour if attention were mainly directed to the Introduction and Books I and III, very especially to Book I, which deals exclusively with Indian philosophy. Book II (on Pantheism in Western Philosophy) is intended to be more or less of the nature of an illustrative appendix, and I have not thought it necessary to elaborate this part of my subject, the ground having been frequently traversed and my chief interest being in Indian philosophy. For the study of Pantheism it is becoming increasingly natural to turn to India. Here we may find Pantheism in its purest form and as a mode of thought with which one is brought into constant contact in daily life. No more promising field, therefore, could be found for a study of the effect of Pantheism upon a general sense of the value of life. After fifteen years of residence in India, I may perhaps lay claim to a certain moderate amount of first-hand acquaintance with current Indian philosophical thought and with the persistence of the influence of the ancient tradition.

In reference to our own country, also, the problem of the actual influence of Indian philosophy upon Indian life seems to be of special importance at the present time in view of the deepened sense of

imperial responsibility which the war will inevitably bring. We shall be called upon to attempt to reach a fuller understanding of the thoughts and springs of action of that people whose destinies are so strangely linked with ours. We shall have to intensify and also widen that interest which was so strikingly aroused a year or two ago by the world-wide popularity of Sir Rabindranath Tagore, and which has already resulted in a growingly intelligent appreciation of the Indian point of view. It cannot be said that this appreciation has always been discriminating. At times there seems to have been a slight tendency both to underestimate the value of Western philosophical and religious contribution and to overlook certain deficiencies in Indian speculation which near and constant contact with the peoples of India makes abundantly evident. My own opinion is that a radical transformation of Indian thought will be necessary if India is to advance mentally, morally, and religiously, and my main object in this discussion is to show, with, I hope, all due and sympathetic appreciation of the immense value of Indian philosophy, the necessity for this transformation.

I am indebted to the proprietors of the *International Journal of Ethics*, the *London Quarterly Review*, and the *Calcutta Review*, for permission to use material which has already appeared in the form of articles in these periodicals. My grateful thanks are due to Dr. J. N. Farquhar, for assistance in the preparation of the manuscript for publication, and to my wife and Prof. George Ewan, my colleague, for much valuable help in the correction of proofs.

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

THE FASCINATION OF PANTHEISM

Though the wide and ever-increasing fascination of Pantheism is one of the most noticeable tendencies especially in our own day, its attractive influence is as old as the history of thought. Goethe declared that 'all antiquity thought in this way.' We may e.g., trace much of our Pantheism back to the ancient philosophy of India, and discover it as the ruling conception of the sages of the Vedas. Touched with a more exclusively religious spirit, Pantheism became the foundation of the mysticism of the Middle Ages. In more modern times it reappears in the philosophy of Spinoza; and it is the world-view from which Hegel often struggles in vain to escape. Very few philosophies of Being have succeeded in avoiding pantheistic elements, and it might be almost justifiable to use of it the unconventional phrase that 'though thrust out with a pitch-fork, it will ever return.' From its popularity both in ancient and modern times we may draw the conclusion that Pantheism has a very immediate bearing on our sense of the value of life, and that, therefore, an investigation into its relation to an optimistic or pessimistic estimate of human possibilities is a legitimate inquiry.

We shall first of all, in an entirely analytic and preparatory manner, attempt to gain some insight into the secret of this fascinating power which the

centuries unite in acknowledging, and which is felt to-day both in the East and in the West. We shall attempt to answer the question how Pantheism has been able to attract so many minds and bring within the sweep of its influence men widely separated in their initial point of view, professing many different creeds and belonging to many different races. If we can to any extent discover the secret of its influence, we shall be in a better position for deciding whether it ministers to mental and moral sanity or leads rather to intellectual bankruptcy and moral despair; whether it is a defence of religion or 'floats in a cloudland between Theism and Atheism, confessing God and making Him nothing under the pretence of making Him everything.'

We may then, after setting forth as clearly as possible the philosophical meaning which may be attached to the terms *Pantheism*, *Optimism*, and *Pessimism*, undertake an examination of some of the leading pantheistic systems in order to find out what has actually been the character of their outlook on life,—whether this attitude may rightly be described as optimistic or pessimistic; and we shall probably be able to discover within each system certain reasons for the prevailing attitude to life-problems. We shall confine our attention for the most part to the philosophy and general thought of India, not only in order to keep our subject within manageable limits, but because the ground of Western Pantheism has been more frequently traversed, and because in India Pantheism has always been the prevailing intellectual doctrine, held with an intensity which transforms it into a religion. Even to-day it is the dominant inspiration of thought and life.

It might, indeed, be thought that the admission

of general fascination which has just been made would render an historical inquiry superfluous. We might argue that whatever is universally attractive is by that very consideration proved to be optimistic, and that, therefore, Pantheism may be admitted to be optimistic without any further evidence. But in India especially it would be immediately pointed out that this would be a begging of the whole question, and that we cannot assume that the influences which have been most constantly and widely operative have always made for happiness. It might even be argued that universal attraction may be explained more readily by pessimism than by optimism, on the ground that pessimism is nearer the nature of reality. Without, however, subscribing to the view that pessimism is the truest estimate of life, we may point out, with more general application than to India, that fascination may sometimes be of the nature of a spell, or it may be the symptom of a disease, or, to use ethical language, it may indicate a mode of life which is attractive to our indolence, but which cannot afford us any permanent satisfaction. Fascination, then, is not a trustworthy *a priori* sign of optimism.

Another proviso which it is necessary to make is that, whatever be the character of the view of life which is found to prevail, this will not be taken as an immediate proof or disproof of the validity of Pantheism as a philosophical system. In other words, we shall not adopt the narrowly pragmatist method of regarding satisfactory practical consequences as a proof of philosophical validity, or unsatisfactory practical consequences as a disproof. Certain reasons for the satisfactory or unsatisfactory consequences will, of course, emerge in the course of our historical inquiry. We shall avail ourselves

of these, and, in our concluding chapter, shall attempt to collect and construe them into a criticism, favourable or unfavourable, of the general philosophical position of Pantheism. The intellectual consequences of the pantheistic point of view will be taken account of as well as the practical consequences in the hope that in the former we may find some explanation of the latter.

Our first task, then, is to describe more fully the character of the appeal which Pantheism makes to human nature, and discover, if we can, something of the secret of its influence. The fascination may be considered in its *intellectual*, *emotional*, *and moral* aspects. The intellectual man of to-day, whether metaphysically or scientifically inclined, prides himself on his open-mindedness. He desires to dispense altogether with categories which force us to transcend their limitations or which savour of dogmatism. In regard to the deepest matters of thought he is more negative than positive; or, where he is positive at all, the position reached must be non-exclusive, befitting an apostle of catholicity and an opponent of all definite theology. Pantheism seems to give him what he needs. It has been described as *Protean*, and is the most catholic of all systems of thought. It encourages a love of vagueness by representing such vagueness as a necessity of progressive thought, and this impression of its liberality has no doubt been deepened by the fact that it has in almost every age encountered the opposition of the most rigidly orthodox theologians of the Church. Even at the present day divergence from pantheistic theory is in some quarters taken as a measure of the almost culpable conservatism of a theological writer. Amongst the more educated of the people of India, with whom Pantheism is a working creed, this

theoretical catholicity is a constantly recurring claim. 'One religion is as good as another' is a very favourite saying, and the attitude on religious matters which this phrase indicates is not unlike that of the anti-theological thinkers of Western lands.

We are peculiarly sensitive to-day to the limitations of the conception of personality. 'To depersonalize man,' said Amiel in his *Journal Intime*, 'is the great tendency of our age'; and the tendency is not less strong now than it was when these words were written. There has been a reaction against the doctrine of the 'impervious self,' against Kant's excessive emphasis upon individual self-determination. This attitude to human personality has affected theological speculation and manifested itself in a growing horror of anthropomorphism. As Eucken says: 'Modern movements and developments show the strongest objection to assigning a central position to personality and a personal life; they insist on a wider conception of life, and they find it in the idea of an impersonal process impelled by an objective necessity, a process which, whether natural or spiritual, controls all human labour. Men who for long had shrunk back and held aloof from the environing world would now fain come into closer relation with it and win a direct share in the life of the universe. This is the element of truth which inspires the often very misty effusions of modern Pantheism and gives it its hold over the minds of our contemporaries. This type of thought finds anthropomorphism and mythology in many an aspect of the traditional religion that once seemed a pure expression of divine truth; and not only so, but it feels the whole atmosphere of those earlier times to be too narrow and oppressive, and bursts their bonds with the force of an elemental passion.'[1]

[1] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 60.

This depreciation of personality is probably due originally to crude ideas of personality,—ideas coloured to a great extent by our consciousness of the limitations of our own organism. We may say that it is because the depths of the concept have not been sounded that its application is felt to be so limited. But, however this may be, the fact of its felt inadequacy remains, and we are told that we should not have the presumption to limit God by the use of the concept in reference to Him. Such use, it is said, is a temptation to dogmatism. For, after all, personality is a concept with a considerable amount of content; it is an assertion of knowledge, and we should not assert knowledge in a sphere where none is really possible. Or, if we are unwilling to go so far as to admit that no knowledge is possible, we should abandon ineffective and worked-out forms of thought and make use of categories which have been already successfully applied in the region of physical science. At the very least we should not block the way to the Divine by the use of categories which have merely traditional value.

To those whose point of view thus reveals an 'antagonism between the comparative limitation of the personal conception and the grand immensity of the impersonal' Pantheism appeals. It fills up the void left by our consciousness of the limitations of our most cherished conceptions. Our sense of failure does not destroy our desire for contact with the divine immensity; and, having been baffled in one direction, we try other ways of approach. The first satisfaction which Pantheism affords us is that it allows us to describe this immensity as a *unity*. We have escaped from the limitations which distressed us, but we have not abandoned ourselves to chaos. Our intellectual abhorrence of

unresolved particularity is respected, and we are supplied with conceptions which allow us to include all details within a unitary system, or give us metaphysical justification for disregarding such details. If, further, we have some lingering regrets over the loss of more personal conceptions, we are encouraged by being told that the elements of personality we have had to sacrifice are themselves worthless and hindrances to our highest good. And if we should have doubts as to whether we have, even under the guidance of Pantheism, reached the proper point of view, we may be comforted by its vagueness. We are not tied down to any hard-and-fast theory of the One and the Many. We may leave this and many other problems like it in an attractive indefiniteness which we need not *at first* distinguish from a solution.

More positively, Pantheism satisfies our desire for penetration into real being. The prevailing fashion of modern thought leads to a concentration of attention upon the changes of the finite world. But this is not enough. The world passes away and the lust thereof, and in the intellectual sphere change is unintelligible except in relation to a permanent. We may at first attempt to find this permanent in the law of the process itself, but we soon find that we dislike universal evolution, and are not satisfied unless we can find a system within which, indeed, evolution takes place, but which is not itself evolved. The changes of the parts do not mean changes of the whole. As Illingworth says, 'We cannot possibly conceive a literally universal evolution.'[1] From a more idealistic point of view, we may say that we desire to be assured that the Real towards which our search is directed does not merely come into existence with our

[1] *Doctrine of the Trinity*, p. 8.

knowledge of it, but eternally *is*. The mood is well expressed in the moderate reproaches which Sir Rabindranath Tagore brings against the science of the West. 'Its science has always talked of the never-ending evolution of the world. Its metaphysic has now begun to talk of the evolution of God Himself. They will not admit that He *is*; they would have it that He is also *becoming*. They fail to realize that while the infinite is always greater than any assignable limit, it is also complete; that, on the one hand, Brahma is evolving, on the other he is perfection; that in the one aspect he is essence, in the other manifestation,—both together at the same time, as is the song and the act of singing. . . . Doubtless we are directly aware only of the singing, and never at any one time of the song as a whole; but do we not know all the time that the complete song is in the soul of the singer?'[1]

Now Pantheism seems to meet these tendencies of thought, whether in the East or in the West. In one phase it offers us a totality within which there may be change, but which is not, as a whole, subject to change. Or, if we are still perplexed by the subject of change, there are other phases of Pantheism, especially Eastern, which invite us to disregard the reality of all variations and permutations of phenomena, and fall back upon the one and *only* Reality, an undifferentiated ultimate Being. All is God, we are told; and why should we be perplexed by the unreality which lies outside the Being of God? Why should we beat in vain against the doors that seem to shut against us, when we may know that they are shadowy, and through them we may take our solitary way?

The assertion of unity at the expense of diversity may be carried through in various ways. The

[1] *Sādhanā*, p. 126.

changing phases of the world may be crushed together like the parts of a closing telescope. We may thus pass from the temporal to the eternal and become able to face with greater confidence the problems of creation and final issues. Any doctrine of creation which is to be ultimately satisfactory must be monistically conceived—a demand which creates many difficulties. These difficulties, however, Pantheism allows us to meet by the use of such phrases as 'eternal creation,' and by excusing us from further investigation into the particular character of creation and the place left within it for human freedom and activity. When, again, we turn to the other end of the process and attempt to conceive the ultimate result in which nothing shall be left unrelated to or unresolved in God, Pantheism seems once more to help us, only demanding that we should be willing to concentrate our attention almost entirely upon God and regard as of no account the place which the creature may finally have in relation to Him. Even the most orthodox theologian might be attracted by this apparent agreement of pantheistic theory with the Pauline doctrine of God 'reconciling all things to Himself.'

Again, when a philosopher has to meet the suggestion that his system of thought is merely a subjective and arbitrary construction, he may base his defence upon a pantheistic theory of knowledge. How can the thought in question be merely *his* thought when all thought is the thought of God? The humble philosopher is merely the medium of truth. It is not conceivable that he should be in private possession of even a little bit of the illimitable truth of the world. In the words of Herbert Spencer, 'he, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies

through whom works the Unknown Cause, and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief he is hereby authorized to proclaim and act out that belief.'[1] According to such a view as this, the individual is a stage in the development of the thought-activity of the universe, and must give up the idea that any contribution he may make is made by himself as an individual. At the same time the thought-construction which *comes to him* will gain additional validity, for it will now be regarded not as an arbitrary and individual invention, but as the product of a deeper and more universal life. Such an attitude is a reflection of the reminiscence doctrine of Plato and of the Vedāntic idea that salvation consists in a restitution of the soul's original nature. The philosophy which takes up this point of view is rapidly approaching mysticism, and is met and helped on its way by Pantheism.

It has been indicated above that Pantheism has a specific appeal to the scientific mind, and, indeed, the revival of Pantheism at the present time is largely due to an action and reaction between religion and science. Science continues to feel the necessity of religious conceptions even while not definitely acknowledging the need even to itself. There are many thinkers who, attracted and somewhat misled by the developments of modern science, have departed altogether from their ancestral beliefs. The claim of facts—or what they call facts—is an exclusive one, and, as we have seen, it is necessary to be appropriately humble in presence of the contrast 'between the grandeur of the material universe and the insignificance of man.' The scientific method, with its dependence on facts only, must be rigorously applied. But yet

[1] *First Principles*, p. 123.

the scientists are not satisfied. The world they know is, after all, a small one, and they are conscious both of the inadequacy of isolated facts and of the great disproportion between the known and the unknown. Though their religious belief 'has been driven out from the darkness and the cloud of Sinai' and has taken refuge in the 'mystery of matter,' yet the sense of mystery still remains, and it is admitted that 'nature is not all dust, but a living portion of the spheres.' And so the scientists look longingly back to the country from which they have come out and desire that the divine may still be with them in the wider world upon which they have entered.

Not that the scientist would for a moment *explicitly* abate his claim to the all-sufficiency of science, or look forward, with Schelling, to a time when 'the sciences shall more and more cease and immediate knowledge take their place.' All that he desires is that something shall be added to science in as unobtrusive a way as possible, something which, while not disturbing it, shall make it more religiously attractive and enable him to see nature 'with a divine glow upon it.' It is an addition of this sort which he supposes Pantheism allows him to make. Within a pantheistic system God becomes coincident practically with the laws of the universe. He is little more than 'a function, or correlative or subjective reflection, or mental impression of each phenomenon of the material or moral world as it flits before us.'[1] There is no abandonment of scientific method. Pantheism does not depend upon forced relations to a dead past or problematical constructions of a shadowy future. It takes the universe as it is, and presents it as a God who may be worshipped—a living God of yesterday and

[1] Newman, *Idea of a University*, p. 59.

for ever, but also of to-day, who 'shines upon us more splendidly now than in the times of our ignorance, because larger powers of contemplation have been evolved in man.' [1]

Spencer's philosophy may be taken as one great example of scientific Pantheism. Even his reverence for the Unknowable is Pantheism in more abstract form. In any case the Unknowable plays the part of a sleeping partner, so that the reverence otherwise given to it may be transferred to the world in its concreteness and its totality—the result being Pantheism in its naturalistic form. There is no need to bring about any elaborate reconciliation between religion and science, for their claims are not competing. Each may find its place in a view of the world which is both scientific and religious, and to such a point of view Pantheism will bring us. There is no need to fear that science must degenerate into atheistic materialism. 'Men who have not risen above that vulgar conception which unites with matter the contemptuous epithets "gross" and "brute" may naturally feel dismay at the proposal to reduce the phenomena of life, of mind, and of society to a level with those which they think so degraded. But whenever we remember that the forms of existence which the uncultivated speak of with so much scorn are shown by the men of science to be the more marvellous in their attributes the more they are investigated, and are also proved to be in their ultimate natures absolutely incomprehensible, we see that the course pursued does not imply a degradation of the so-called higher, but an elevation of the so-called lower. . . . We will anticipate that only in a doctrine which recognizes the Unknown Cause as co-extensive with all orders of phenomena can

[1] Picton, *Religion of the Universe*, p. 45.

there be a consistent religion or a consistent philosophy.' [1]

The whole tendency we have just been considering might be described as the under-pinning of empiricism by religion. Empiricism suffers usually from being irreligious and pluralistic. Pantheism covers over these defects, and thus widens the appeal of empiricism to human nature. Empiricism becomes more orthodox and more respectable by taking on a religious and mystical guise. It is of course a further question whether this religious dressing of mechanical conceptions may not make their paralysing effect more deadly and allow the practical application to life of theories which might otherwise have remained merely speculative and so comparatively harmless.

We must now turn to the more *emotional* element in the fascination of Pantheism. It will readily be admitted that the form of thought which most easily kindles the devotion of the saint and stimulates the rapture of the poet is Pantheism in one or other of its phases. It is especially the religion of the dreamy and unpractical mood, and, when such moods affect a mind possessed also of intellectual strength, Pantheism becomes the faith of the poet and the mystic. The mystic of mediaeval Europe joins with his Eastern brother in despising the rights of the individual and craving absorption in deity, and both are supported by Pantheism of an abstract type. In its conception of God as the All and its transcendence of the limits of the finite, Neo-Platonism finds a metaphysical basis and supports its consciousness of salvation. The aim of Julian of Norwich is to ' noughten all else that is made for to love and have God that is unmade '; Jacob Boehme, continuing the mystical tendency, speaks in

[1] *First Principles*, p. 556.

the same strain : ' When thou canst throw thyself for a moment into that where no creature dwelleth, then thou hearest what God speaketh.' The aim of the rapturous devotion of the saint is just to be able to negate everything but God, to possess one's soul alone, and yet not alone,—to possess it as a phase of God. We must ' noughten ' all else that stands even in momentary contradiction to God. If the mystic can say with sincerity ' God is all ' he feels that he has reached his goal. He feels that he is enabled to reach the highest level of religion, and, in becoming conscious of the identity between himself and God, his soul is satisfied with the possibility of absolute devotion.

Even those who, instead of saying ' God is all,' prefer to say ' All is God,' find their emotions captivated by the thrill of devotion which the immensity of the conception calls forth. The poet and the artist alike are attracted by the possibility of an immediate contact with the beauty of the world which may be found to be also an intimate communion with the Divine Spirit. It is such an idea that underlies much of our poetry, especially the poetry of Wordsworth. It is essentially an emotional appeal which is here made. Nature is made the object of devotion, and, as has been said, ' The strength of the influence of nature is emotional rather than intellectual, and consists in a sense of nearness and communion.' In his efforts to get away from unhealthy and morbid subjectivity, and to listen with childlike receptivity to the teaching of Nature, Wordsworth relies mainly on his conception of Nature as divine. It is true, perhaps, that he never becomes entirely a Pantheist, that he never quite gives up his belief in a personal God or merges Him in the universe, but still, even for Wordsworth the Universal Spirit tends to ' shade

off into the impersonal.' Stopford Brooke describes Wordsworth's God as 'a personal Being, ever melting on the skirts of consciousness into the impersonal'[1]; and again in the same work[2] he says: 'It is true that a certain amount of what is called the Personality of God seems to slip away in Wordsworth. God entering into that which is impersonal is thought of as impersonal.' For Wordsworth, indeed, the whole intricate and vast movement of nature becomes the complex working of God. Nature herself is alive with life and joy, as one *Mighty Being*. Every one of her minute processes, as the poet watched it with loving attention, seemed to him to speak—

> Of life continuous, Being unimpaired,
> That hath been, is, and where it was and is,
> There shall endure.

So Nature, conceived of as a divine Unity, and regarded through the medium of intense poetic feeling—in other words pantheistically regarded—becomes for Wordsworth an object of religious adoration. This attitude gives elevation and value to his life. He can speak of the 'bliss ineffable' with which he felt—

> The sentiment of Being
> Spread o'er all that moves and all that seemeth still.

His poems have been called 'one long exposition of the grand elementary principle of pleasure,' and J. S. Mill testifies, as a personal experience, that he found them to be 'perennial sources of happiness.' It is true, of course, and, in view of our subsequent discussion, it is worthy of note, that with Words-

[1] *Theology in the English Poets*, p. 153.
[2] Page 125.

worth the rapturous mood had its exceptions. He could speak of himself also as—

> More like a man
> Flying from something which he dreads,
> Than one who sought the thing he loves.

But still, on the whole, it is also true that for him Pantheism gave zest and value to life, and therein lay its attractions.

It has been said by Mr. W. B. Yeats, in *Ideas of Good and Evil*, that only those ideas in which philosophy has become poetry are likely to be permanent. If this dictum has any truth in it, Pantheism, as the philosophical creed which forms the most natural basis of poetry, would seem to have a presumption in its favour on the ground that what becomes easily permanent is thereby recognized as valuable. No other system of thought has influenced the poetic mind so widely and deeply as Pantheism. It seems the natural basis of the aesthetic attitude. It consecrates the beauty of the particular and at the same time enables us to transfuse with emotion even the most abstract conceptions.

The poetical appeal of Pantheism might be described from a psychological point of view by saying that it is an attempt to retain all the freshness and vividness of the perceptual level of thought and at the same time to win some of the advantages of higher conceptions. When the intensely interesting but confusing variety of phenomena are presented to us, we feel within us the stirrings of a demand for unity, and are urged onwards by the necessity of grasping the reality of the whole which is inclusive of or behind the phenomena. At the same time, if we attempt to analyse this demand intellectually, the greyness of thought creeps over

our whole horizon, and we have to substitute the painful process of system-building for the glory of immediate intuition. We do not wish, however, to lose the colour, and so we attempt to seize in a more emotional manner the values of the higher levels of thought and at the same time to preserve the advantages of perceptual vividness. Pantheism here comes to the aid of those who are lovers at once of the particularity of beauty and the universality of truth by enabling them to universalize their appreciation of beauty and at the same time feel the immediacy of its appeal.

Finally, we may consider the influence of Pantheism in the sphere of *ethics*, and its appeal to men of a practical turn of mind. The desire for what, from the intellectual point of view, we called permanent elements of experience, reappears here in the practical moral life. When a man is striving after the good, he is nerved to the struggle by the thought that the good is not something which he has now by his own individual effort to bring into existence for the first time. It must be something which has been in existence from all time, and unless it is now, in principle at least, a reality, to whatever extent it may await a special detailed setting in his particular moral experience, it cannot effectively summon him to service. Here becomes apparent the value of an ideal of which we frequently find traces in Eastern Pantheism—the idea that progress consists, not in moral change, but in the recognition of that which is already real. It is also an emphasis in the moral sphere of the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence, and an ethicizing of the more modern saying that ' the Absolute has no seasons, but all at once bears its leaves, fruits, and blossoms.'

A danger, of course, lies very near. The idea just referred to may be so emphasized as to withdraw

our attention from the necessity of progress. That such a consequence *may* follow is not, however, our present concern. We are at this stage simply noting the presence in Pantheism of an idea which fascinates because it seems at first sight to give us assurance of the permanence of moral values. Our belief in the everlasting reality of goodness has an apparently firmer basis when it can rest on the pantheistic doctrines of the permanence of the whole or the ultimate illusoriness of everything which lies distinct from the nature of God. It is, of course, a further question how far in Pantheism the nature of the whole or of God is ethically conceived, but this is a question which belongs to criticism rather than to analysis of fascination. It is sufficient to notice at this point that the conception *may* have an ethical influence whatever its own character may, on further examination, turn out to be.

Again, the discipline which Mystical Pantheism inculcates appeals strongly to the man who is in earnest about the perfecting of his own character. He is summoned to rise through the various grades of being, to pass through the 'purgative life' and the 'illuminative life' to the 'unitive life'; and the very description of these stages, or of others like them, inspires him with the ideal of progress being slowly but surely made. Moreover, the pantheistic emphasis upon the whole of things, when this is brought into relation to human society, calls us to the surrender of merely individual and selfish aims and encourages the restraint or destruction of desires connected with the continuance of a separate personality. Pantheism thus offers us a mode of thought which awakens some of the noblest impulses of our nature, and seems to stand in attractive contrast to the sickly other-worldliness

which would make salvation consist only in the saving of one's own soul. It encourages a man to look beyond the narrow confines of his own family, his own community, his own race. It offers him a conception within the sweep of which he may bring the whole world of humanity. Because God is All and All is God, therefore all men are divine and become the proper objects of service. 'Humanity is incarnated in each man, but each man is only realized so far as he passes out of himself into the wider life of humanity.'

But while one phase of Pantheism might thus conceivably be used in support of ideals of mutual service, we should notice, on the other hand, its connection with an entirely different view of social life. In certain of its phases it has been used as a refuge when inequalities were most glaring, political life most unpromising, and moral effort, generally speaking, despairing and weak. These conditions may be noted in connection with the Vedānta philosophy and Stoicism. Mediaeval mysticism also, which is another form of Pantheism, seems often to have arisen in circumstances of gloom. Amalric of Bena, one of the earlier mystics, lived at a time when all the vigour of individual life was crushed out under the double despotism of the Church and the Empire; and a period of revival of mysticism set in during the fourteenth century, when Europe was still suffering from the effects of the devastation wrought by the Holy Wars.

The explanation is that Pantheism, in one of its *Protean* variety of forms, offers most of all an *escape* from present troubles. It seems to promise a relief from the calamities of life, however great these may be. Its popularity increases, therefore, with the severity of the calamities. Its world-view enables us to negate, or at least to forget, the worry

of details and the vexations of ordinary life. It affords a metaphysical justification for withdrawing from the responsibilities of society, and, sometimes, in the hurry of our escape, we do not distinguish sufficiently between flight and victory. If we are passively inclined, temporary relief may wear the guise of permanent conquest, and Pantheism at least promises us this temporary relief. We may, like the ostrich, be merely burying our heads in the sand, but at least the sand is provided, and occasionally even human beings may be grateful for it.

Whatever our further critical estimate of the value of Pantheism may be, the analysis of its fascination, undertaken in the foregoing pages, will leave us with the impression that it is a force to be reckoned with. It has, indeed, always been regarded as such a force, but the attitude towards it in the Christian centuries has been curiously varied, and might be described as one of mingled distrust and welcome. Catholic theologians have described Pantheism as 'the inevitable goal of Protestantism,' and do not thus indicate a specially commendatory attitude. A writer of forty years ago could say, more generally, 'Christianity and Pantheism must be reconciled, otherwise it will be the worse for Christianity.' Here we have evidence of an idea that reconciliation is at least possible, and that, therefore, Pantheism is not entirely inimical to faith. This complexity of attitude was further illustrated a few years ago in the extraordinary interest and opposition aroused by an attempt to interpret Christianity from an entirely pantheistic point of view—an attempt which proceeded on the assumption that the truth of Pantheism was indisputable and its premises altogether trustworthy. This assumption, however, was not received with such a degree of unanimity as to warrant us in thinking

that, after all the warring of the creeds, we had reached a new era of pantheistic peace. Rather is the controversy still with us, and at the present time we seem again called upon to examine the claims of Pantheism and to inquire whether it can honestly and permanently satisfy the various needs of our human nature, whether it increases or decreases our sense of the value of life. As Francis Thompson says, 'Pantheism is a half-way house,' and we have to determine the direction of our further journey. We have analysed its fascination and indicated some of its premises, but before we surrender ourselves to its influences we have to ask whether we are dealing with the apparent or with the real, with trustworthy or untrustworthy premises.

We may here indicate certain questions which have to be faced and answered before the value of Pantheism can be held to be firmly established. It has been suggested, e.g., that the vagueness by which Pantheism attracts those who are unwilling to hold to any fixed form of faith may become so predominant as to involve almost intellectual bankruptcy. May it not be the case also that the unity by which it attempts to hold together the diversity of the world often falls apart from the diversity, disappears into the region of abstraction, and leaves the diversity to degenerate into mere naturalism, determinism, and fatalism? Is there here a permanent satisfaction for the emotional rapture of the poet or the mystical devotion of the saint? May there not be a constant danger of reaction, showing itself in helplessness or indifference before the actual problems of the world? Finally, is it not a question worthy of consideration whether the assurance of community with the universal life and the expansion of sympathy which Pantheism produces in the

sphere of ethics may not be more than counterbalanced by its failure to deal thoroughly with the problem of suffering and evil, by its depreciation of moral distinctions, its rigid determinism and denial of progress, its lessening of the sense of responsibility, and its disregard of both the present and the future worth of the individual ? Under its influence may we not sometimes put contemplation before conflict and care more for flight than for victory ?

It is with this problematic element in pantheistic thought and aspiration that we have to deal in subsequent chapters. But before proceeding to our historical survey we may attempt to analyse a little more fully certain terms the meaning of which we have hitherto taken for granted.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF PANTHEISM IN ITS TWO PHASES. OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

We now proceed to consider more fully the meaning of Pantheism, in order that, before estimating its real influence upon our sense of the value of life, we may be able to form a somewhat more exact idea of the system of thought with which we have to deal.

The fundamental formula of Pantheism would seem to be a double one—*Nothing is which is not God, and God is everything which is.* There can be no other source of being than God, and no other power than His. We, and the rest of the universe, are but phases of His Being. Nothing can be conceived as having even temporary separation from Him. God and the universe must be identified, and, if any part of the universe *cannot* be identified with Him, that part must be negated.

Here at once we see the possibility of the emergence of two closely related phases of Pantheism, which might be described as *negative* and *positive.* The one answers to the mystical craving after identity, for mysticism has been called 'the logic of identity as applied to religion.' In order that nothing may hinder the identification of the human soul, with all its experiences, and the Divine, the Pantheist of this mystical type is willing to sacrifice, not only the particularity, but also the reality of the things of the ordinary world. The other

pantheistic tendency might perhaps be described as a tendency towards correlativity. A Pantheist of this second type is willing to sacrifice the individuality or the particularity of himself and all other finite existences, but he is not willing to sacrifice either his own or their reality. He wishes, however, to grasp the reality of everything under an intense form of unity, the intensity of which unity, we are sometimes warned, is hardly adequately expressed even by calling it an organic unity. He desires the sense of being himself an integral part of this unity, which unity, including himself, is to be described as *God*.

Now, it may seem to be a matter of indifference whether, in stating the fundamental articles of the pantheistic creed, we say 'God is All' or 'All is God'; but this apparently simple conversion covers the two distinct tendencies indicated above, which may be further described as a tendency towards abstract idealism on the one hand, and towards naturalism on the other. In the one case, the plurality of the actual is sacrificed to the unity of God. If anything should seem to come into conflict, either theoretically or practically, with the one and only Being of God, the reality of this conflicting element is forthwith denied, our ordinary experience is cancelled by the help of the category of illusion; and we stand firmly to the position that nothing *is*, which is not God.

The other tendency of Pantheism is towards a deification of the actual. The *totality* of that which we at present partially know is to be regarded as divine. Everything that *is*, is God; and we move easily in the direction of pure naturalism. The conception is greatly in favour with scientists who have to do with the particular aspects of the world. It encourages them in their rejection of centralizing

metaphysical conceptions, but yet enables them to retain for the world a certain diffused divinity and to enjoy an after-glow of religious faith. Their position might be described as an assertion of the *immanence of God* with a transference of emphasis from the word 'God' to the word *immanence;* and, however we may criticize the consistency of some of the systems thus pantheistically tinged, we cannot but agree with the words in which Dr. Inge refers to them: 'The immanent Pantheism or Monism which is the creed of most scientists who are religious is a real religion, which only ignorance and prejudice can stigmatize as infidelity.'[1]

Whether the name Pantheism can, with propriety, be applied to both these phases of thought is a greatly disputed question. Deussen, in reference to Indian philosophy, distinguishes between the two phases, and calls only the second Pantheism. The first—or more abstract and negative phase—he prefers to call idealism. 'The universe is mere appearance. This appearance is not God as in Pantheism, but the reflection of God, and is an aberration from the divine essence.'[2] Mr. Allanson Picton would follow Deussen in preferring the name of Pantheism for the second phase, but would not so strictly exclude it from application to the first. Apparently his unwillingness to apply it in the first case arises from the fact that idealism, when brought face to face with actual experience, seems almost inevitably to give place to a theory of emanation; and Mr. Picton is afraid lest this emanation theory may involve a partial separation of any part of the universe from God. If, however, the illusory character of such temporarily separated existences were at the same time maintained, I do

[1] *Studies of English Mystics*, p. 11.
[2] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 160.

not think that Mr. Picton would insist on disallowing the name of Pantheism to what Deussen refuses to call anything but abstract idealism. It may be noticed that, in reference to this very Indian philosophy, at least in its earliest and poetical beginnings, Hegel can say, 'Wollen wir den sogennanten Pantheismus in seiner poetischen, erhabensten, oder, wenn man will, krassesten Gestalt nehmen, so hat man dafür in den Morgenländischen Dichtern umzugehen, und die breitesten Darstellungen finden sich in den Indischen.'

Dean Inge, in his recent book on *Studies in English Mystics*, seems to tend in the opposite direction, and to prefer to apply the term Pantheism to the first phase, reserving, as descriptive of the more immanent form of Pantheism the term *Panentheism*. It should be noted, however, that this very term 'Panentheism' is used by Dr. Walker [1] to describe a distinctly theistic position—a relation of God to the world midway between Deism and Pantheism. Dr. Robert Macintosh seems to go further even than Dr. Inge in his application of the term Pantheism to the first phase. In discussing whether Hegel can be called a Pantheist he says, 'Ordinarily Pantheists hold unity to be important and difference trivial; they regard unity as an objective fact, but difference as a mere human fiction' [2]; and again: 'When writers with the Hegelian tinge repudiate Pantheism, they mean to repudiate the conception of a substance repelling all predicates or attributes, a unity excluding all manifoldness, a being with no definite quality. Such a view had again and again been put forward by the pantheistic schools of the past as the deepest view of reality.' [3] Many more

[1] Cf. *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, p. 250.
[2] *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 7.
[3] Op. cit. p. 41.

examples of diverse usage might be quoted; and, in view of such diversity, it is obvious that the term Pantheism must be understood in a sense wide enough to embrace both the phases described above.

That we are justified in this wide application of the term would seem to be further brought out by the history of pantheistic theory. Historically, Pantheism includes both phases, and the one is constantly passing over into the other. The same system, the same philosopher even, exhibits both tendencies, often unconsciously for the most part. It is this difficulty of separating the two phases which underlies the conflicts between the followers of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja over the proper interpretation of the Vedānta philosophy. The more prevailing tendency of the Vedānta system is probably towards an abstract idealism, to which it was led by the difficulty of reconciling the contradictions of the finite world. In the face of a difficulty it adopted the rapid method of negating the finite world altogether. But, when it had arrived at this abstract position, ordinary experience still demanded explanation, and so the Vedānta philosophy had to provide some means of deriving the finite world from its central principle. In other words, it had to move in the direction of the second phase of Pantheism, and bring about a more or less complete identification of God with the finite world taken as a Unity, or rather as a Totality.

The same difficulties reappear in connection with Spinoza. On the one hand, he is condemned for his assertion of abstract undifferentiated substance. He is described as an *acosmist*—one who denied utterly the world of finite things. On the other hand he is condemned (as e.g. by Prof. Campbell Fraser) for his tendency towards materialism and

naturalism. Spinoza does not himself help us to clear up the matter to any great extent. He has, e.g., given no unmistakable indication as to the relation which he intends the *attributes* to bear to the primal substance,—whether they are to be regarded as constituting the nature of substance, or whether our so regarding them is an instance of what is very like subjective illusion. In the latter case he would have to be regarded as a Pantheist of an idealistic type, and in the former case as tending towards naturalism.

Again, we are left with the same hesitancy as regards Hegel. If the Absolute is not itself the subject of development, then the various stages of empirical development must all, except the last, be regarded as illusory, and Hegel himself will approach very near to the idealistic type of Pantheist. If, on the other hand, the Absolute itself undergoes development, we are landed in a system of naturalism, which nevertheless, because of the very immanence of the Absolute in it, must be pantheistically conceived. Dr. R. Macintosh describes this tendency of Hegel as resulting in a system of 'colossal and remorseless naturalism'[1]; and Prof. Pringle-Pattison seems to agree with this view of a phase of Hegelian thought.[2] Hegel himself gives no clear indication of his position relatively to the two tendencies, and so the battle continues to be fought, illustrating always more strikingly the difficulty of separating between the two phases of Pantheism.

In Wordsworth's poetry, also, we find the two phases in close combination. At times he seems to be an apostle of the more abstract kind of Pantheism, as in the following lines:

[1] *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 7.
[2] Cf. *Hegelianism and Personality*, chap. vi.

That false secondary power
By which we multiply distinctions, then
Deem that our puny boundaries are things
That we perceive and not that we have made.

and again :

The gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea, almost on the mind itself, and seems
All unsubstantiated.

These verses obviously describe a mood of mind which comes very near to regarding the material world as an illusion or unsubstantial appearance.

The other phase, however, also appears, especially in the constant care with which Wordsworth studies the minuter processes of nature. This detailed attentiveness has sometimes been regarded as incapacitating him for receiving large and 'total' impressions; but, however this may be, this particularized interest—and in this connection we may trust the unifying power of his poetic emotion—certainly prevents him from acquiescing in entire negation of the finite. We find the second phase of Pantheism exemplified in such lines as—

The ever-living Universe,
Turn where I might, was opening out its glories;

and in the quotation already given, when he goes on to speak of the—

Sentiment of Being *spread*
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still,

we seem to gain an impression of that diffused divinity which is characteristic of more naturalistic Pantheism.

Again, while it is true that most modern scientists who wish to retain a certain religious setting for their scientific view of the world would indicate

their adherence to the second form of Pantheism, they are not without leanings in a more idealistic direction. Mr. Allanson Picton, e.g.,[1] speaks of the 'contemplative sense of one infinite, all-pervasive Unknowable with which we are confronted by the mysteries both of matter and of mind.' It is true that if we keep more closely to the Spencerian position, with which Mr. Picton is in deep sympathy, we should have to regard the Unknowable as playing little part in his ultimate combination of philosophic ideas. In fact, as already indicated, we should be left only with the world of phenomena surrounded with a halo of mystery, transforming them, indeed, into fit objects of religious devotion, but too vague to exercise a distinguishable influence on the system. Mr. Picton, however, shows a disposition to give a much more worthy place to this Unknowable. Not only does he protest against the assertion that it does not concern us, not only does he oppose the tendency to regard it in a merely negative way, but he devotes a whole chapter to the consideration of the positive religious value of this Unknowable; to this chapter he gives the noteworthy title of 'The Unknowable as God.' Further, when we inquire as to the relation between this Divine Unknowable and the world, we find it described as 'a Being in whom, whether we will or no, we are merged as mere points in infinity.'[1] The Unknowable also is described as the sphere where all doubts and difficulties are removed, though we may question whether this recognition of the Unknowable may be regarded as a solution of our doubts and difficulties or as anything more than a confession of their fundamental insolubility. Mr. Picton, however, will not permit suspicion here. If we are inclined to fling ourselves against

[1] *Religion of the Universe*, p. 61. [2] Ibid. p. 81.

the barriers to human knowledge which his use of the word Unknowable implies, he comforts us by telling us that even if we do not know what 'God is Himself, we may know what He is to us.'[1] Still, this comfort is not very permanent. The general effect of the whole chapter is to warn us that knowing what God is to us is but a temporary peace, and that we shall not attain to that 'peace which passeth all understanding' until we recognize that 'not faith only, but knowledge and thought, merge in God, as all the rivers run into the sea; that God, though unknowable "in the strict sense of knowing," is no more a negation than the ocean is to the wondering child.'[1] The almost exact repetition of the words of one of the Upanishads is worthy of notice, and still more noteworthy is the recurrence of the point of view of the Vedāntist and the mystic—that idealizing tendency which surmounts difficulties by relegating them to an abstract unknowable region, of which we, nevertheless, have some vague kind of knowledge, indescribable in terms of our ordinary reference. With writers of the type of Mr. Picton, it might be said that the invisible world occupies a far larger place in their philosophy than the visible. It can, at least, be said that here we find a tendency away from the second and towards the first phase of Pantheism, though, of course, we do not mean to assert that Mr. Picton and those who sympathize with him sacrifice the visible to anything like the extent that Indian philosophy does.

When we seek to trace the *psychological* development of this connection between the two phases, I think it must be confessed that the more naturalistic phase has the temporal priority. We must,

[1] *Religion of the Universe*, p. 96. [1] Ibid. p. 97.

however, distinguish between the common consciousness for which the problem has arisen, and the more properly philosophic mind. The ordinary man, in his attempt to form a systematic view of the world, is first of all confronted by various contradictions. He is conscious that these contradictions require reconciliation, but he is content for a time to hold them together in exceedingly loose combination. As, however, he takes the problem seriously, and gives himself definitely to philosophic thought, probably he will find relief by moving away from the sphere of diversity and asserting another sphere altogether where the contradictions are not explained, but where they simply cease to be. The philosopher is still aware of the diversity and its problems, but it is in a vague way, and he is for the most part content to hold the unity and the diversity side by side without any serious attempt to reconcile the two. The difficulties of the finite world are at first not sufficiently pressing. This, however, is not a position in which he can for long maintain himself. The necessities of thought demand a reconciliation. At this point either of two courses is open to him. He may reconcile the diversities of the finite world by attempting through the help of cosmogonies to derive these diversities in a more or less unsatisfactory manner from his unitary principle, or he may get rid of the difficulties altogether by denying the whole finite world in which they exist. Now the philosopher will probably at this stage be influenced most of all by reaction from the ways of thinking of the ordinary consciousness, and will therefore adopt the second of the two solutions. Still, he cannot altogether shake himself free from the ordinary conceptions. In the Upanishads we find the two ways of thinking side by side, the subjective

and the objective, linked perhaps, as Deussen puts it,[1] by the assertion that 'the *Ātman* is at once the infinitely small within us and the infinitely great outside of us.' In any case, the philosopher must again come into line with the popular view. When the force of reaction has spent itself, he must apply his central hypothesis to the explanation of the facts of the world. Again cosmogonies appear, but this time they are more rationally constructed, the symbolic framework is slighter, and as a whole, they bear a closer resemblance to a firmly articulated system of thought.

In view of what has been said, we do not think that Deussen is wholly right in regarding the more abstract and idealistic position as the earlier one. This assertion may be correct in relation to the thought-development of an individual philosopher; but in such a conglomerate system as the Vedānta philosophy, we must recognize a double process—a process from the ordinary consciousness to the philosophic point of view, and again from the philosophic point of view back to reconciliation with ordinary consciousness. The human mind naturally turns outwards before it turns inwards. It is inclined to adopt a philosophy which leaves untouched the reality of the finite world, rather than a philosophy which denies that reality. On the other hand, in the mind of an individual philosopher, especially in that of a great system-builder, the process would seem to be reversed. The philosopher, first of all, falls in love with his central principle, and only later seeks to bring it into line with the more popular and practical views. It is impossible, however, to separate the two parts of the process with any historical accuracy, especially in connection with Indian

[1] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 234.

philosophy. We must be content to leave them side by side.

However difficult we may find it to clear up questions of psychological and historical precedence in connection with the two phases of Pantheism, the logical connection of the two is extremely simple. If we take as the fundamental position of Pantheism the double assertion that God is all that is, and that there *cannot be* anything but God, we may lay emphasis upon either the positive or the negative side of the assertion. This easy logical transition has already been hinted at, and it is undoubtedly the case that Pantheism holds in solution the two ideas of God 'as at once including all existences and yet being indifferent to any particular form of existence.'[1] You are then at liberty, on the one hand, to use the elastic conception of Divine Immanence, and speak of God as the soul of the world with such a degree of vagueness as simply to identify God with nature. God is all that is; and, therefore, God is all the universe. But in view of some of the problems of actual experience and the difficulties of identifying God with the entire finite universe, we are led in the other direction, and would seem to be justified, by an equally necessary logic, in adopting an opposite point of view. Following strictly the requirements of the pantheistic formula, you cannot allow that anything *is*, and yet is not God. If you cannot identify God with the world as it actually is, then, in so far as your identification fails, you must negate the world. From a truly pantheistic point of view, the individual must be looked upon as simply a mode or manifestation of God, and whatever makes it difficult for us to view the individual in this light must forthwith be denied. Indian Pantheism simply

[1] Norman Smith, *Studies in the Cartesian Philosophy*, p. 134.

lays emphasis on the negative part of the pantheistic formula, i.e. on the words 'cannot be.' Whether this involves an unwarrantable disregard of ordinary experience will be discussed later on; but in the meantime it may be said that the position appears at least as justifiable as that of the Pantheist of a more naturalistic type, who boldly asserts that human freedom *cannot be*, because it conflicts with his fundamental formula that God is all in all.

The above considerations have shown that the two phases of Pantheism are so inseparably linked together that in our treatment of it we must keep both of them in view. They will be found to be not unlike each other in their effect upon our view of the value of life.

Before leaving the subject of the meaning of Pantheism, there are two closely connected ideas which require some further examination. These are *Determinism* and *Monism*.

The question of determinism will be more fully considered later on. Here it may simply be said that, as regards its subjective effect, at any rate, it is a close associate of both phases of Pantheism.

The Vedānta indeed allows to us what Dr. Barnett calls pure or transcendental freedom, which consists in embracing the whole world within the range of our consciousness, and at the same time regarding that consciousness as identical with the universal consciousness. But Dr. Barnett also points out that the interpretation of the Vedānta is 'that in so far as man shares in the empiric world his whole moral and physical life is at every instant strictly predestined.'[1] The value, however, even of the freedom which is left to us is minimized by the fact that the whole tendency of idealistic

[1] *Brahma-knowledge*, p. 47.

Pantheism is to lessen the value of the individual. If the reality of the whole finite world is regarded as illusory, the individuals which compose the finite world partake of the illusory character. Their effectiveness is at best an effectiveness within a dream, and so can be taken little account of. Consequently, in face of the determinism of scientific empiricism, the individual is left without that defence which would arise from a sense of the value of his own personality. The practical outcome, therefore, though it may be an indirect outcome, of this phase of Pantheism is a thorough-going determinism, a dim foreboding of fate, a feeling which expresses itself in such a thought as 'It does not matter; let the world do with me as it pleases.'

The other phase of Pantheism leads much more directly to determinism. For, as we have seen, it leads to a naturalism interpreted to a large extent by means of physical categories, in which the individual has no place except that of a wheel in the vast mechanism of the world. This consequence of Pantheism should be carefully kept in view for the purposes of subsequent discussion.

Monism is also an idea which is closely associated with Pantheism, and is probably recognized by all as specially characteristic of the modern forms of the doctrine. In reference to Haeckel it has been said that 'materialistic Monism is Pantheism with special emphasis laid on the materialistic aspect of the universe.' Spinoza also may be regarded as a monist, and many Pantheists lay great stress on this aspect of their system, because it seems to bring it most clearly into line with the requirements of modern thought, philosophical and scientific. At the same time certain protests are raised against this identification of Pantheism with Monism. It is argued that the *One* of the Monist has not such

a degree of theistic colouring as would warrant comparison of it with the *One* of the Pantheist. It is suggested further, e.g., that it may endanger the application of the fundamental formula that 'God is all.' If God is identified with the primal substance from which everything is evolved, it is thought that the mere introduction of evolutionary process may lead to a distinction between what is evolved and the primal unity. The evolution is regarded as a temporal sequence, and fears are expressed lest, as we look back along this sequence, we may be able to distinguish God as the beginning from the further stages of this sequence, which further stages we should then have to regard as *other* than God. It is probably some such fear as this which leads Mr. Allanson Picton to criticize the doctrine of emanation as illogical—i.e. as involving at least the temporary separation of the evolved parts of the universe from God. His fears would be supported to some extent by Lotze, who says, 'The theory of emanation implies a *distinction* of reality as inside from reality as outside the Mind.'[1] The same position is taken up by Prof. Flint, who says, 'The notion of emanation and the notion of absolute unity are exclusive of each other.'[1] But the theory of emanation does not necessarily contain these contradictions and illogicalities. The two realities, even when distinguished, may be phases of one all-comprehensive reality. It is not necessary to say that the 'Reality inside the Mind' alone is God, and that 'the other Reality' must be not-God. Both may be divine. Further, we need not press the idea of temporal sequence so far as those holding the theory of emanation are accused by Mr. Picton of doing. We may look upon God not

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 88.
[2] *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 347.

only as the beginning of the process, but as the middle and end of it as well. We may, i.e., look upon the emanations not as *from* God but as *within* God. The more philosophic view of evolution itself tends in this direction. Every stage of the evolutionary process may be looked upon not as the outcome merely of the preceding stage, but as determined by the scheme of the whole. In this way the unity required by Pantheism may be preserved while the conception of emanation is retained.

It may set our position in a clearer light if we point out that, while the conception of emanation is not necessarily antagonistic to the pantheistic idea, there is an essential incongruity between this latter and the idea of creation. It is advisable not to confuse the discussion by raising the question whether creation did or did not take place at any fixed time. In the same way it is beside the point to introduce the idea of eternal creation in order to show that there is no contradiction between creational theory and Pantheism. It is difficult indeed to draw any distinction between creation and emanation if attention is exclusively directed towards the relations of time and eternity. Our thought will move in a more satisfactory direction if we consider the question from the point of view suggested by Spinoza, i.e. in reference to the connection between creation and necessity. It would seem that it is here the opposition lies, and that creation essentially involves the attribution of personality and freedom of choice to God. We are more inclined to agree rather with Lotze in his idea that for creation a Divine Will is necessary and a 'determination of it *which might not have been*.' This is diametrically opposed to the root idea of Pantheism. The true Pantheist regards

God and the universe as identical, and if he applies determinism to the universe, he, of necessity, applies it to God also. The conception of choice on the part of God is excluded. What *is*, *had to be*. It is impossible to say that it might not have been.

Further, creation, as interpreted in connection with Divine personality and choice, involves a separation between God and the universe which the strict Pantheist would not allow. Pantheism involves the exhaustion of God in the universe, whereas creation involves the self-determination of the Infinite into our limited universe, God Himself retaining unexhausted possibilities. In recent thought the idea of creation is still more closely connected with this idea of self-limitation on the part of God, especially in reference to the problem of human freedom. Creation involves the giving by God of a certain amount of independence to the world of human beings which He has created. As Ward says, 'We cannot regard God as absolute in such a sense as to deprive ourselves of all personality and initiation. Since it is from the many as real that we start, we are forced to say that creation implies limitation, otherwise the world would be nothing . . . oriental servility and *a priori* speculation have made God synonymous with an "Infinite and Absolute that leaves room for no other and can brook none."'[1] It is the same idea that marks the divergence of Sir Rabindranath Tagore from the oriental Pantheism by which he is otherwise so largely influenced. 'If this individuality be demolished, then, though no material be lost, not an atom destroyed, the creative joy which was crystallized therein is gone. We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this speciality, this individuality which is the only thing we can call

[1] *Pluralism and Theism*, p. 443.

our own, and which, if lost, is a loss to the whole world. . . . If God assumes His role of omnipotence, then His creation is at an end, and His power loses all its meaning. . . . He has willingly set limits to His will, and has given us mastery over the little world of our own.'[1] The fundamental weakness of Pantheism will probably be found to lie just in this impossibility of finding room within it for this aspect of creation.

We may conclude our short discussion of the meaning of Pantheism by considering its relation to the doctrine of Transcendence. It might be supposed that this doctrine would be wholly excluded from Pantheism, but there are indications that in certain cases this exclusion is not made with the strictness which consistency would seem to demand. Two extensions of pantheistic doctrine in this direction may be noted; one of which, though it may not be inconsistent with the fundamental principle of Pantheism, seems, nevertheless, to involve a somewhat unusual use of the word 'transcendence'; and the other of which, while not departing from the current meaning of transcendence, does seem to involve an inconsistency with Pantheism.

The first tendency is to use the word Pantheism to express the undoubted truth that, while God may be identified with the universe, He is yet not necessarily identified with the universe *as we know it*. This—which might be described as an 'extensive' use of the word 'transcendence'—describes a position which no one would care to dispute, as no one accuses Pantheism of claiming complete knowledge for the individual. To leave such a loop-hole of escape does not, however, though it introduces many difficulties, alter the principle

[1] *Sādhanā*, pp. 70 and 86.

of Pantheism. God is still regarded as *identifiable* with the universe, though not identified with the universe as we know it. The actual identification will keep pace with the increase of our knowledge. At the same time, it must be pointed out that we have here an illegitimate use of the word 'transcendence.' This word is usually taken as implying a protest against the identification of God and the world, and this protest is usually based, not merely upon the present incompleteness of our knowledge, but upon a conception of a relation between God and the world which is described as fundamentally *not* one of identity.

The other extension of pantheistic doctrine is hinted at by Miss Maud Joynt in a recent contribution to the *Hibbert Journal*.[1] In this article she protests against the identification of God with the universe we know on the ground that God is rather to be conceived of as a system of Platonic ideas or forms underlying the phenomena of sense. God is thus regarded as transcending the universe we know, and as the sphere of ideas or forms which constitute the essence of the sense-world but which are not immediately apparent to ordinary perception. It does not, however, seem to me possible to Platonize Pantheism in this way without introducing a conception of transcendence which is inconsistent with the fundamental pantheistic idea. With consistent Pantheism it is, as will be shown later, a case of 'all or none,' i.e. you must either identify God with the whole universe or cancel the reality of everything that is not God. You must either refrain from using the category of illusion altogether, or use it in a thorough-going manner. If the human intellect is allowed to have a certain amount of penetration as regards the discrete realities, this

[1] Cf. October 1907, art. 'Krishna and Christ.'

means that human experience has to be taken account of as itself a reality. It then becomes difficult to find a point within this reality at which the reality ceases to be and illusion takes its place, or—to speak in pantheistic language—the divine ceases to be. Where did error begin, and where is the explanation of its beginning? Sense-phenomenal experience must partake of the reality of the rest of human experience, which is the same as saying that it must partake of the reality of God, who is all reality. It seems then that we must, in order to be consistent Pantheists, either deny all value to human experience, or be prepared to accept the full context of human experience as part of the detailed sum of reality, the other name for which is God.[1]

To discuss the effect of Pantheism on our sense of the value of life is the same as to discuss whether it leads to optimism or pessimism. This is a question which is by no means easy to answer. As Dr. Inge points out, 'Pantheism has many developments. We cannot even say whether a thorough-going pessimism or a thorough-going optimism is the more legitimate outcome of its principles.'[2] He goes on to show how Carlyle was a pessimist and Emerson an optimist, though both apparently started from the same pantheistic presuppositions. The question is debated all down through the history of pantheistic systems. The ancient Vedāntist set out with the intention of providing a remedy for or at least a release from the ills of life, and his modern supporters in India of to-day resent most warmly the accusation of pessimism which others are equally ready to bring against the system. The Stoics are by some classed as optimists and by others

[1] Cf. Bk. III, chap. i. [2] *Studies in English Mystics*, p. 213.

as pessimists, and with regard to Spinoza the same uncertainty reigns.

It is really a question as to whether Pantheism has been successful in its attempt to provide a solution for the misery of the world, or whether it has failed, and its failure must be reckoned as an additional evil, adding to the evils that already exist the confusions of intellectual bafflement and the pain of disappointed hope. Before discussing the success or failure of Pantheism, however, we must inquire a little more closely into the meanings of optimism and pessimism, in order that we may discover the precise form of optimism or pessimism, as the case may be, which Pantheism is alleged to encourage.

We may define a true optimism as that attitude of mind which, in full consciousness of the exact state of things in the world, holds to the belief that the highest values are being, and will be, realized. Such a definition does not commit us to any particular theory of the end of existence. Whatever particular end we may take to be the end of highest value, we are optimists if we assert that this end will assuredly or even most probably be realized. It may be said that this definition will include even a pessimist, as he virtually takes pain and evil as the highest end and asserts that their increase, rather than their diminution, is the direction in which the world is moving. We must remember, however, that a belief in the realization of the highest values includes not only the confidence that certain ends will ultimately be realized, but also indicates a subjective desire for such realization. Such a desire in reference to pain and evil can hardly be attributed to the pessimist.

Pessimism arises ultimately from just such a contrast between our desires and the hope of their

fulfilment. If one could be conceived as desiring above all things the increase and ultimate victory of pain and evil, it would be impossible for him to be a pessimist. He is a pessimist just because, implicitly at least, he does *not* desire this victory of pain and evil, but fears that this victory is at least probable, if not altogether certain. His very reason for making use of the words *pain* and *evil* arises from his ability to conceive some *better* state which is not realized in the present, nor likely to be realized in the future. The contrast which is most burdensome to him is that between the real in the sense of that which can actually be realized, and the ideal, in the sense of the highest value.

We may, therefore, take our definition as a rough working definition of optimism. We have used the words 'in full consciousness of the exact state of things in the world' in order to distinguish between superficial and real optimism. A true optimism does not shut its eyes to the facts of pain and evil, but concedes them, and then sets itself to supply a remedy. The matter has been very well put by Prof. Rogers, 'Any practically valuable assertion of optimism which looks facts in the face must avoid extremes either of despair or of an ill-advised and light-hearted confidence that affairs are sure anyhow to turn all right. In other words, an optimism which understands itself will never say, "Things are as they should be. Everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds." It will rather say, "Things can be made right, and I have enough confidence in the possibility to enable me to go to work forthwith to bring it about."'[1] We are not likely to forget one side of the warning given here and confuse optimism with the extreme of despair; but we *are* likely to forget the other

[1] Rogers, *Religious Conception of the World*, p. 273.

side of the warning and think we have found a basis for optimism when we have done nothing more than adopt a superficial and light-hearted view of the world and its processes. The Deists of the eighteenth century were notable sinners in this respect, with their blindness to things evil, their easily evoked admiration and wonder at every so-called marvel of adaptation, and their low ideals of what might be expected of mankind. It was a case with them of ' Blessed is the world of which little is expected.' But with all their light-heartedness they were not true optimists. They might lay claim to the name on the ground that they believed that the highest values were being realized, but they forgot the warning against a superficial view of the actual state of the world, and, after all, their highest values were so low that the realization of them would not count very much one way or another.

But such superficial optimism is not characteristic only of the Deists, who can in no way be suspected of Pantheism. It also seems to be the kind of optimism which Pantheism itself encourages. But whether this is really the case or not our subsequent discussion will make clear. In its more abstract form Pantheism promises the bliss of absorption or communion—a bliss which is reached by running away from the evils and pains of ordinary experience and regarding them as unreal. Of course, it is easy to be happy in this way, just as easy as it is to be happy on awaking from an agonizing dream when we discover that it has been a dream. Only the dream of life has a way of going on, the pain and the evil go on with it, and the awakening is not so easy. The optimism of this kind of Pantheism is based on an encouragement, by means of the doctrine of illusion, of the natural forgetfulness of men.

Such forgetfulness is not always worthy of encouragement, and it is to be noticed that we can deny evil in this way only by denying the good along with it.

Naturalistic Pantheism seems to encourage a superficial optimism of another kind. It does not deny that what we call pain and evil are facts, but it denies our right to describe these facts by the words 'pain' and 'evil' in their ordinarily accepted meanings. They are to be regarded as merely phases in the development of the good. We have (borrowing the illustration of Leibniz) no more reason to trouble ourselves about them than about the splotchy appearance of a closely-viewed part of an oil-painting which as a whole is beautiful. Least of all need we trouble ourselves to remove the pain and evil. All will come right in the process of the ages, and we need not worry. Such teaching, however, superficially promising though it may be, does not do much to remove the smart of pain from those who are feeling it; neither is it consonant with the deliverances of our moral consciousness regarding the reality of evil. If we ourselves are suffering grievously, it does not comfort us very much to be told that with the system of things as a whole all is well. We feel that such comfort is a little too like the empty consolations of those who have never themselves suffered. The encouragement to moral quiescence also sounds somewhat similar to the moral platitudes of those in whom the moral sense has never awakened, and who wish to keep its slumbers unbroken in the case of others also. We require to remember, as Wenley says, 'that dismay in the presence of sin' is often 'but the other side of a capacity to revive uprightness.'[1] A theory of life which denies

[1] *Aspects of Pessimism*, p. 43.

the *need* of progress may of course seem to be optimistic, but it is not an optimism which is in accordance with common sense and the deliverances of our moral consciousness, or which can give us any support amidst the shocks of the ills of life. When, therefore, we are told that Pantheism is optimistic, we must ask very carefully what kind of optimism is meant, and must refuse to be put off with a delusive appearance which is but pessimism in disguise.

Pessimism has been described as 'the philosophical scheme which explains the universe by proving its badness, or, more strictly still, the systematized view of human nature which ends in the elimination of moral value—goods there may be, but good on the whole there emphatically is not.' [1] This definition hints at two phases of pessimism, one of an extreme and positive character, which we might call undiluted pessimism, and the other of a negative and more moderate character, which is content with denial of good on the whole, and in which therefore pessimism is often rather implied than explicitly stated. The positive pessimist definitely asserts that the process of the world is towards evil and towards pain. He 'sees in the course of the world nothing but the blind development of an original ground or principle, which, far from setting itself the task of realizing what is joyful, is rather conscious, in the individual spirits, of its unhappiness, and leaves nothing for them but the wish for their own annihilation.' [2] The process of history is irreconcilable with the goodness of God. It is useless to speak of the education of the human race, and the progress of mankind is more than doubtful. If there is progress at all, it is progress

[1] Wenley, *Aspects of Pessimism*, p. 1.
[2] Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 149.

towards evil. Schopenhauer, in developing his pessimism, asks the pertinent question, 'Where did Dante take the materials of his hell but from the actual world? And a very proper hell he made of it'; and the same writer finds the principle of the world-process in a restless, striving will, blundering through the ages, and producing nothing which had not much better have been left unproduced. For Hartmann the secret of all things is in a cold, unconscious thought, pitilessly moving onwards, without concern for the fate of human beings, and without realizing in any degree any end which might be called good. For the true pessimist everywhere, indeed, 'all human endeavour is futile, all progress illusory,' and 'the keenest sufferings are merely specially perfect examples of the universal rule.'

The positive pessimism, however, is, as pointed out, not the only pessimism. There is a negative pessimism which does not go so far in asserting a definite process towards evil, but which either is merely indifferent to the need of progress, or denies its possibility. The tendency of things may not be towards evil, but there is no progress in an opposite direction. Further, there is very little in human life that is worth making an effort for. Such an attitude of mind is not, it will be noticed, very far removed from what we called superficial optimism. There is this difference, however. In the case of superficial optimism, one is very doubtful about its being optimism at all. In the case of the kind of pessimism we are now considering, one has little doubt about its being pessimism. The only doubt is whether it can be properly described as superficial, for, when examined, it is found to be pessimism of a very deep-seated kind, and, so far from being superficial, can often not be detected until one has looked far beneath the surface.

Now it is pessimism of this kind which seems to be associated with the more idealistic form of Pantheism. This system leads to a belief in a God who is outside of human consideration and indifferent to the needs of men. The denial of the finite world means a denial of its value, and what is the net result of this but pessimism? My point may be illustrated here by a contrast which Mr. Chesterton, in his *Life of Dickens*, draws between sorrow and pessimism. He points out that sorrow is based upon the loss of certain things that have value, whereas pessimism is based on the consciousness that nothing has any value at all.

A creed of rigid determinism and of deification of the actual also seems to involve pessimism of a very real kind. If the actual contains a mingling of good and evil, and if, though it may not be definitely asserted that there is a preponderance of evil, progress is nevertheless denied, we are shut up to pessimistic conclusions. A frustration of the natural hopefulness of man is in itself an evil, and if this frustration is looked upon as inevitable, a gloomy view of the world is, without doubt, the outcome. If we are to remain optimists, we must either assert that the present state of the world is all very good, or allow the possibility of progress. The denial of progress is, in itself, almost an assertion of pessimism, for it is a law of human nature that if a man does not become better, he inevitably becomes worse, and, if a man is denied the possibility of either himself becoming better or of making his world better, he is almost forced to acquiesce in the judgment that both he and his world are becoming worse. 'For there is no standing still in the moral life: if we are not going on, we must be going back. Augustine says, "Say but it is sufficient, and you are lost. Ever increase, ever

march on, ever advance." '[1] We do not say that such pessimistic consequences have been definitely taken account of and deliberately accepted by those who deny the possibility of progress and assert the divinity of the actual, but we hope to show that such unpleasant consequences can hardly be avoided if pantheistic principles are rigidly adhered to. It must be fully admitted that what has been called negative pessimism is only pessimism of an indirect kind, but it nevertheless implies a set of conditions which, when definitely thought out and practically realized, cannot fail to produce pessimism of the more positive type.

In order to show that this close connection between negative and positive pessimism is not merely imaginary we may here briefly refer to a striking similarity between the conclusions of Hartmann and those of Spinoza. The former would be acknowledged by all to be a positive pessimist. The latter is frequently called an optimist, but we would suggest that he might with equal justification be called a negative pessimist. His God is blindly working in the production of things which constitute the sum of being. He has neither end nor purpose, so that from the point of view of the conservation of values he might be described as a pitiless indifferentist. Further, the great unconscious one, both with Spinoza and Hartmann, cares nothing for the working out of moral purpose. Could Spinoza consistently deny the assertion of Hartmann that immorality is an unavoidable evil? Spinoza may not paint the actuality of suffering in such dark colours as does Hartmann, but he gives us no more satisfactory practical relief from the pressure of the problem. His solution is purely intellectual, and consists either in such a *thinking*

[1] Inge, *Studies in English Mystics*, p. 100.

away of evil as is impossible for the ordinary man, or in a denial of the reality of evil which is revolting to the moral consciousness. If he will not accept either of these conclusions, the only course left to him is to admit both that evil is real and that it is ineradicable, which double admission is neither more nor less than a judgment of pessimism. What is true of Spinoza may be shown to be true of other Pantheists; but this will be more fully brought out in subsequent discussion.

Before passing from our definition of pessimism we may make still another distinction. There is a pessimism which is based, not upon the alleged lack of or failure of a world-purpose of goodness, but upon disappointment of a purely personal point of view. The poet or thinker may find it impossible to get beyond his own merely subjective mood or to escape from the influence of personal idiosyncrasy; he may even go to the world full of whims and caprices, and, because the world does not satisfy him, he may pronounce it full of suffering and all very evil. For purely subjective reasons he may even take a jaundiced view of the world which it is very difficult to distinguish from ill-temper. We find traces of such a pessimism in the poetry of Byron, and it perhaps appears in Rousseau, whom Prof. Wenley describes as 'continually looking for himself in the wrong place.' Even the more philosophical pessimism of Schopenhauer is too much influenced by the gloomy idiosyncrasies of his own character to be entitled to consideration as a purely philosophical system. This purely subjective pessimism is not what we have to do with in this essay. The pessimism we are considering is of a broader and more objective kind. We must distinguish pessimism as a mood from pessimism as 'the dialectical explication of

an idea.' It is the latter kind of pessimism that specially invites our consideration. We cannot, however, make the distinction a very definite one. As Ward says: 'A distinction is sometimes made between those who are pessimists by temperament and those who are pessimists on purely theoretic grounds, as the result of dispassionate inquiry and conviction; but, in truth, I doubt if there has ever been a pronounced pessimist who could be placed in the latter class alone. Schopenhauer and Mainlander, who are accounted philosophers, were every whit as bad as Byron and Leopardi.'[1] We cannot, on the one hand, claim that the pessimism we are considering has always been 'dialectically explicated,' or assert, on the other hand, that, in addition to being an *idea*, it is not also a *mood* of mind. We shall, nevertheless, endeavour to confine ourselves to moods of a universal character and closely related to the idea, and shall avoid those due to mere caprice.

[1] *Realm of Ends*, p. 320.

BOOK I

PANTHEISM AND THE VALUE OF LIFE IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

INDIAN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY AND ITS SOURCES

In our historical inquiry into the effect which Pantheism has had upon the appreciation of life-values, we may turn first of all to India, following a custom which has been growing in strength during recent decades. Even three-quarters of a century ago Cousin could write: 'We are constrained to bow the knee before the philosophy of the East and to see in the cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy.' More recently Max Müller wrote, in his Introduction to his edition of the *Sacred Books of the East* (p. x.), 'To watch in the Sacred Books of the East the dawn of the religious consciousness of man must always remain one of the most inspiring and hallowing sights in the history of the world.' On all hands the greatness of India's intellectual heritage is being recognized, and vigorous efforts are being put forth to make more accessible the contributions which she may offer towards the solution of religious and philosophical problems. Even though, for a Western inquirer, the veil of mist which has arisen from centuries of differing custom and environment still hangs low over the Eastern horizon, *ex oriente lux* is rapidly becoming more than a meaningless motto.

But in reference to the problem we have specially before us, we may turn with more than a general

confidence to the philosophy of India. If our object is to discover the effect of Pantheism upon practical life-values, we must find a set of circumstances in which Pantheism appears in its purity as an intellectual doctrine which for a lengthened period has formed a basis for a philosophy of religion and morals. Such a combination of circumstances we find in India. Nearly all writers on the subject admit that it is the native home of Pantheism. It has been described as 'radically pantheistic, and that from its cradle onwards.' In Vedic thought we may trace the pantheistic tendency back almost to its emergence in the religious consciousness. In the *Ṛig-Veda* (x. 90) we read, 'He is Himself the very universe. He is whatever is, has been, and shall be.' Through the intervening centuries we can trace an unbroken line of development through the Brāhmaṇas, Epics, and Purāṇas—down to the thought of the later nineteenth and even twentieth-century writers who confess themselves of the same faith as their earliest forefathers, and both in their profoundest philosophical speculations and in their practical life trace their inheritance, unsullied, from the most ancient religious consciousness of their race.

What is of special interest to us here is the fact that pantheistic thought in India has been peculiarly undisturbed by external influences. In the thought of other lands Pantheism has no doubt been a constantly recurring tendency, but sometimes long periods have elapsed between its appearances. When it re-emerged it had to struggle with conflicting modes of thought, and the victory often lay with its opponent. In any case the victory was never more than doubtful, and was gained at the cost of compromise. In India there was certainly struggle, but it was not a struggle between equals.

Pantheism secured and retained predominance with comparative ease, and such terms as had to be made were almost wholly in her favour. In any case, the contest was rather with popular beliefs than with fully equipped philosophic thought. The result is that in India we have Pantheism in purer form than elsewhere, and our study of it will not be so much embarrassed by the necessity of noting the influence of counteractive tendencies of thought.

Moreover, in India of the present day Pantheism is a dominating influence. The intellectual inheritance of the past is not by any means forgotten or despised. It is said that there have been more editions of the Upanishads in recent years in India than of Descartes and Spinoza in the whole of Europe. The *Gītā* is the most popular religious book amongst all literate classes, and the direct influence of Pantheism upon it is unmistakable. Current philosophic thought about religion and morals is pantheistic in tendency. The religion of the majority of the educated classes is a refined Pantheism, and their attitude to the popular religion is that welcome of all forms and indifference to any particular form of the Divine which Pantheism permits and encourages. Even the illiterate classes themselves, in their occasional reflective moods, allow their thoughts to run upon pantheistic lines. The picture given by R. C. Bose is not overdrawn : ' Pantheism in other lands is the monopoly of a few. In India, however, it is co-extensive with social or national life, being held both by the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low. Pantheism of a thoroughly spiritual type is preached and advocated, not only in temples of piety, but in places of public resort, in streets and thoroughfares, not only in the seclusion of cloisters

and cells, but amid the din and bustle of hives of industry and marts of commerce.' [1]

But while one may hope to find in Indian pure, universal, and enduring Pantheism, yet these favourable conditions have their corresponding dangers. For the Indian student Pantheism is like the atmosphere—the very universality of its pressure makes him unconscious of it, and it is impossible for him to get outside the range of its influence. He, therefore, cannot occupy the detached position which is often necessary for true valuation, nor can he rid himself completely of more or less unconscious bias in his criticism. Of course, esoteric criticism has the countervailing advantages of greater sympathy and insight, but there is frequently a danger lest disabilities which are really serious defects may be regarded as of little account, or taken as a matter of course and so removed from the sphere of criticism.

For the Western student there are just the opposite dangers of want of sympathy and insight on the one hand and harshness of criticism on the other hand. By those who sympathetically understand without criticizing, he is told that he coldly criticizes without understanding. The difficulty of reaching the Indian point of view has been often emphasized, and it is a difficulty caused by centuries of differing traditions. For the Western student current methods of inquiry in India seem often to be but meaningless survivals, and the philosophical truth which has been handed down to us in the ancient books is often hidden under a mass of verbiage, mythology, and obsolete ceremonial injunction. It is true that the Eastern scholar as well as the Western would admit that what is of value in his standard treatises requires to be detached from

[1] *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 8.

what is philosophically of less value, but the non-philosophical additions would not be for the former entirely useless. Survivals, indeed, they might be from the modern point of view and as to their definite form, but they would be for the Eastern student symbols of a spirit which still inspires him, though he might now express differently the effect of the inspiration. He can also trace them back to their ancient origin, and see that, though meaningless now, they were not meaningless then. They were the scaffolding of the ancient philosophical edifice, which might with advantage, perhaps, have been removed, but consideration of which is still useful in order to show the method of construction employed. What is to the Western mind merely fantastic phraseology is a revelation of the truth rather than a concealment for the Eastern student. But those who come from another country and are the heirs of a different literary tradition are discouraged and find it difficult to continue the search, difficult to remember that beneath the absurdities there is genuine aspiration after truth, and that treasure may be discovered in what was at first considered to be absolutely worthless.

An illustration may be taken from the frequency of the injunction to meditate on the syllable *Om* (or *Aum*). At first this appears to us to be a meaningless absurdity, but, as we reflect, we discover that we have here a symbol indicative of a whole point of view and stimulative of varied philosophical reflection. Not only does the syllable indicate reflection upon the Vedas; it stands as a symbol of speech and life. In fact, its meaning may be so widened that in considering it we find ourselves reflecting upon the soul of man and realizing our kinship with the soul of nature. Throughout its use, also, the syllable indicates a concentration of

thought to which we are unaccustomed and to which we find it difficult to attain. The apparently meaningless injunction, then, with which the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* opens—'Let a man meditate upon the syllable *Om*'—is found to be a compendious formula, capable of application throughout the most important portions of Indian philosophy. As Max Müller says in reference to this syllable, 'It is a mistake to conclude that we have here "vox et preterea nihil." Meditation on the syllable *Om* consisted in long-continued repetition of it with the view of drawing the thoughts away from all other subjects and thus concentrating them on some higher object of thought of which that syllable was made to be the symbol. This concentration of thought, *ekāgratā*, or one-pointedness, as the Hindus call it, is something to us almost unknown. Our minds are like kaleidoscopes of thoughts in constant motion, and to shut our mental eye to everything else, while dwelling on one thought only, has become to most of us almost as impossible as to apprehend one musical note without harmonics. With the life we are leading now, with telegrams, letters, newspapers, reviews, pamphlets and books, ever breaking in upon us, it has become impossible ever to arrive at that intensity of thought which the Hindu meant by *ekāgratā*, and the attainment of which was to them the indispensable condition of all philosophical and religious speculation.'[1]

The impossibility, or at least the extreme difficulty, of attaining the Indian point of view which results from the complexity of modern Western conditions is not, however, the whole of the matter. There is also considerable difference in our estimation of the value of this point of view in itself. Our conception of knowledge is different. The Indian

[1] Max Müller, *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i, p. 24.

mind leans to the intuitive: the Western mind to the discursive. The Indian emphasizes intensity of knowledge: the Western extensity. It might even be said that the Indian mind is more naturally philosophical and the Western mind more naturally scientific.

The 'one-pointedness' of the Indian conception of knowledge is the source of many other differences which we need not enter into here, but which will emerge in the course of our discussion. It explains, amongst other things, the peculiarly idealistic character of Indian Pantheism and the prevalent sacrifice of the multiplicity of the world. It may explain also the tendency towards passivity rather than activity, the slight emphasis upon personality, and the obliteration of distinctions in the moral world which elsewhere seem fundamental. The differences between the two points of view are important and must not be forgotten. They render our task difficult but not impossible, for, after all, there is a unity in all human thinking deeper than differences of race and period.

To the more properly philosophical difficulties we might add innumerable difficulties connected with language and chronology. Sanskrit texts are capable of a paralysing number of different interpretations, and the language is so intricate that one is almost compelled to choose between the study of the language and the study of the philosophy. For most people the attainment of such language qualifications as would render independent interpretative judgments at once possible and trustworthy would leave little time for the study of the contents of the philosophy. Further, some of the most important philosophical books are in the form of a collection of aphorisms which are hardly intelligible as they stand and without the assistance of a

commentary. When we bear in mind also the exclusive views which were generally held in regard to the teaching of philosophy, viz. the esoteric idea that this teaching was to be confined to a few privileged classes only, we shall easily understand that in some cases the aphorisms may have been made cryptic by intention.

The chronology of the various books, and, indeed, of the systems of philosophy they adumbrate, is an almost insoluble problem. For many centuries after the emergence of philosophical thought we have to deal with tradition rather than with written documents, and there is the added difficulty of an almost entire lack of the historical sense, which has suffered many important data to pass into oblivion. To trace chronology with any detail is, therefore, out of the question. It has been said, with a considerable amount of truth, that the dates in Indian chronology are like nine-pins which are set up only to be knocked down again.

From the statement of these difficulties we may pass on to a short account of Indian pantheistic literature. The main philosophy to which we shall direct our attention is the Vedānta, and the basis for this is to be found chiefly in the Upanishads. The system of the Vedānta, however, might be said to include, not only the Upanishads, but also the Sūtras derived from them in the course of several centuries of development, and also the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. It may perhaps be doubted whether much is to be gained by going beyond this body of literature. We shall see, however, that there are unmistakable prophecies of Pantheism in the Vedas, that there is a vast body of contemporaneous literature which has been greatly influenced by Vedantic pantheistic thought, and

that the influence of its spirit may be traced in much writing of modern times.

Attempts have been made to trace a line of demarcation between the old Vedic period (to which the *Ṛig-Veda* at least belongs) and a new Vedic period which contains the rest of the Vedic literature along with the Brāhmaṇas and the Upanishads. The year 1000 B.C. has been fixed upon as roughly indicating the line of division, and the length of the second period has been calculated as about 500 years. Others would divide into three periods, closing the Vedic period at about 1500 B.C. and inserting thereafter a Brahmanic or sacerdotal period lasting till about 600 B.C. The properly philosophical period would then begin with the first compositions of the Upanishads, approximately about the sixth century B.C. Others, again, would put back the composition of the Upanishads to the ninth century B.C., and thus unite it much more closely with the period of Brahmanic development. The only result, however, which seems to emerge from detailed chronological investigation is an impression of the futility of all attempts at definiteness. The periods selected are found to be constantly changing their boundaries and overlapping one another. We may say, indeed, roughly that the direction of the process is from the *Ṛig-Veda* to the other Vedas, and from Vedic literature as a whole to the Brāhmaṇas, and from these again, through the Àraṇyakas to the Upanishads. We should remember, however, that the earlier Upanishads are probably not much posterior to the later Vedic development, and that at least some of the Brāhmaṇas may be subsequent to some of the Upanishads.

The *Ṛig-Veda* is the earliest of the Vedas, and consists of hymns of praise to the gods, hymns

remarkable at once for their antiquity and their beauty. They were intended to be used by the *Hotṛi*, or first order of priests. In order to understand their thought aright we have to go back beyond the Vedic period and imagine their origin in a stock of ideas common to Indo-European thought, and in fact to primitive thought throughout the world. The *Sāma-Veda* is derived almost entirely from the *Ṛig-Veda*, and was a manual for the use of the second order of priests (*Udgātṛi*) chiefly at the time of the *Soma* worship. The verses were meant to be sung to certain fixed tunes, so that the collection might be described as a book of chants. The name given to the second order of priests, indeed, signifies 'singer.' The *Yajur-Veda* consists partly of verse formulas and partly of prose, and was designed for use at the various sacrifices. At a later date the verse portions were separated from the prose and we thus obtain two forms of the *Yajur-Veda*, the older or mixed edition being called the *Black Yajur-Veda*, and the unmixed being called the *White Yajur-Veda*. Although certain portions of the fourth Veda, the *Atharva-Veda*, are regarded by some as of equal antiquity with the *Ṛig-Veda*, the greater part of it is much later than the other Vedas, and only gradually acquired equal importance with them. In thought and sentiment it differs considerably from them, being greatly influenced by the magical and superstitious ideas which had crept in from the lower strata of popular thought. Probably also the outlook on life had become much more gloomy than it was in the time of the *Ṛig-Veda*.

The collection of ancient verses—or *Saṁhitās*—of the Vedas was connected with ritual text-books or *Brāhmaṇas*. These belong to a later age when the creative impulse had largely weakened and

reverence for tradition had taken its place. The priests of each class had to learn by heart the Veda of their order, and had, further, to apply it to the details of an ever-growing ceremonial. Manuals of instruction were required which should guide them through the complexities of the ritual and embody the sacerdotal traditions and the various interpretations of the Vedic originals. It was impossible, however, to avoid differences of detail in the ceremonial and variety in interpretation of the meaning. Consequently, many different schools or *śākhās* grew up, each with their own Brāhmaṇa, but united in the common aim of applying the Vedic texts to purposes of ritual and worship. We have thus not only Brāhmaṇas containing the instructions for the various classes of priests, but also Brāhmaṇas embodying the difference between these classes. The general character of the Brāhmaṇas was cumbrousness and a marked dependence on facilities for carrying out an elaborate ritual.

An external cause led to a further literary modification. The third stage of the ideal life was held to be that of the *vānaprastha*, or dweller in the woods, who, after fulfilling the duties of a householder, betook himself to the forests for meditation. Such a recluse could not find use for the details of ritual observance. He might, however, retain the value of them by means of interpretations on which he could meditate in the depths of the forest. To supply a need of this sort the Āraṇyakas were composed—'Brāhmaṇas appointed for the vow of an anchorite.' They contained explanations of the ritual and such allegorical teaching as would form a suitable preparation for the hermit life. They are the link between the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣhads.

A still higher mode of life than that of the *vāna-*

prastha may be vaguely distinguished. In extreme old age the life of the recluse was supposed to culminate in freedom from all desires and all duties, his wandering and homeless life being symbolical of such practical abstraction. Corresponding to this stage of outer life, we have the Upanishads, forming the concluding part of the Àraṇyakas, and containing the essential doctrines in which the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas and the theosophic interpretation of the Àraṇyakas might be supposed to find their culmination.

The Upanishads are primarily religious rather than philosophical treatises. Of them generally Max Müller says, 'The question is whether there is or whether there is not hidden in every one of these sacred books something which would lift up the human mind from the earth to a higher world, something to sustain him in his short journey through life, with its bright moments of happiness and its long hours of terrible distress.'[1] But, though they are inspirational rather than doctrinal, it is from them that the main stream of Indian philosophy flows. Particularly are they constitutive of the philosophy of the Vedānta. In the line of tradition they were regarded as spiritually the successors of the Vedas, and Schopenhauer is justified in his exclamation, 'How entirely does the *Oupnekat* breathe throughout the holy spirit of the Vedas!' It is impossible, however, to fix the date of their composition. Conjectures vary to the extent of 600 years, from about 1000 B.C. to 400 B.C. The *Chhāndogya* and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* Upanishads are certainly pre-Buddhistic, and exhibit characteristics which link them very closely to the *Ṛig-Veda;* but some, e.g. the *Śvetāśvatara*, must be assigned to a date later even than 400 B.C. Their composition

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. i. p. 38.

probably extended over many centuries, and the form in which they are now extant is the resultant of many previous forms. The Upanishads of the three older Vedas were very closely connected with the schools attached to these Vedas, and indeed took their names from the names of the schools. The Upanishads of the *Atharva-Veda* were not so connected, neither did they thus derive their names, and the canon of this group was much more open. Practically any later statement of mystical doctrine might be assigned to the *Atharva-Veda*.

Tradition points to an enormous number of Upanishads. As many as 250 are said by Weber to have been at one time or other in existence, but for this statement there is little authority. Eleven Upanishads are commented on by Śaṅkara, and these may be taken as the most important. These may be distributed in connection with the various Vedas as follows:

Ṛig-Veda . . .	*Aitareya*
Sāma-Veda . .	*Chhāndogya* *Kena*
Yajur-Veda (Black) .	*Taittirīya* *Katha* *Śvetāśvatara*
„ „ (White) .	*Īśā* *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*
Atharva-Veda . .	*Muṇḍaka* *Praśna* *Māṇḍūkya*

To these may be added the *Kaushītaki* belonging to the *Ṛig-Veda*, the *Mahānārāyaṇa* and the *Maitrāyaṇīya*, belonging to the Black *Yajur-Veda*.

The eleven commented on by Śaṅkara may be divided into two classes, major and minor. To the

major class may be assigned the *Chhāndogya* and the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, which are probably older than the others, as already indicated. In them no work belonging to post-Vedic times is referred to. Of the minor Upanishads the *Śvetāśvatara* is later than the others. A considerable development, both circumstantial and doctrinal, may be traced. The central ideas of the Upanishads seem to find more acceptance amongst the Kshatriyas at the period of the older works, while in the later period the position is reversed, and the Brahmans appear to be supreme. Further, we find a growing fixity of caste distinctions and a growing prevalence of asceticism as we pass from the earlier to the later Upanishads. As regards doctrine, by the time the Upanishads of the Atharva-Veda were composed the Pantheism of the thought had become more pronounced. The *Śvetāśvatara* has been taken to be a work of a later date because of its references to well-established schools of philosophy and because of its sectarian tendencies. The evidence for the late date is not, however, conclusive, and the modifications of the doctrine of the other Upanishads which we find introduced in this particular Upanishad would not require for their development any considerable period of time. R. C. Bose, in his *Hindu Philosophy*, emphasizes the late character of this Upanishad, but both Max Müller and Deussen regard the evidence as not admitting of any very certain conclusion.

The further development of the Vedantic literature is to be found in the *Vedānta Sūtras*. These represent the culmination of a series of tentative efforts to present the teaching of the Upanishads in a more or less literary and philosophical form. Dr. Thibaut says that the Vedānta Sūtras combine the two tasks of concisely stating the doctrine of the Upanishads and of argumentatively establishing the

special interpretation of the Veda adopted in the Sūtras.[1] The main body of Sutras is attributed to Bādarāyaṇa or Vyāsa. The mass of materials with which the priest had by this time to deal had become unmanageable, and the Sutras aim, above all, at brevity. Indeed to this desire for brevity they often sacrifice intelligibility. As Dr. Macdonell says, 'The prose in which these works are composed is so compressed that the wording of the most laconic telegram would appear diffuse compared with it.'[2] Their writers are said to delight as much in the saving of a short vowel as in the birth of a son.

The time at which the Sūtras were composed cannot be fixed with any certainty, but probability points to a date anterior to the middle of the second century B.C. The result of all the straining after conciseness which has been referred to is that the Sūtras are almost unintelligible without the aid of a commentary. For this reason the importance of the Sūtras is largely absorbed in that of the two great commentaries devoted to their exposition, viz. that of Śaṅkara, who flourished in the ninth century A.D., and that of Rāmānuja, who flourished about the twelfth century. Śaṅkara is usually taken to be the most orthodox exponent of the Upanishad doctrine which had been handed down through the Sūtras, and his interpretation has dominated the subsequent course of the Vedānta philosophy. It is, however, a matter of controversy whether he has on all points correctly represented the doctrine of the Sūtras, or whether he has not in the discussion of certain questions to give place to Rāmānuja. The points of difference between these two commentators will come up for consideration later on.

[1] *Sacred Books of the East*, vol. xxxiv. p. 12.
[2] *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 56.

The commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja practically close the canonical literature which we have to consider in our study of Vedantic Pantheism. As to the relation of the three parts of the system, the Upanishads have sometimes been compared to the Gospels, the Sūtras to the Epistles, and the works of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja to the various New Testament commentaries.

The study of Indian Pantheism cannot be complete, however, without reference to various collateral works, which, though not primarily philosophical, show distinct traces of philosophical influence. In the *Laws of Manu*, e.g., there are unmistakable traces of Pantheism. The *Gītā* is very obviously pantheistic in spirit and shows many resemblances especially to the *Śvetāśvatara* Upanishad.[1] The religion of the Purāṇas, dating roughly from the sixth to the twelfth century A.D., is essentially pantheistic, and it is a Pantheism which is specifically used as a basis for and a justification of popular polytheism. From this body of literature we shall select for examination the *Vishnu Purāṇa*. The pantheistic tendency continues down to modern times, and the concluding chapters of this book will be occupied by a study of the pantheistic elements in the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj, the representatives of the Ramkrishna Mission, concluding with an attempted appreciation of some of the main ideas of the now world-famous writer, Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

[1] Cf. especially *Gīta*, 9–27, 8–9, 7–17, 15–17, &c.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM —RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN THE ṚIG-VEDA

Before we proceed to our main investigation of the effect of Pantheism on the value of life, we must first attempt a short account of the emergence of the problem afterwards to be dealt with by Pantheism. Before considering the solution we must show that there was a serious consciousness of a problem to be solved. How did the difficulties arise with which philosophical thought attempts to deal? In other words, what was the particular kind of wonder which led in India to the emergence and deepening of philosophic thought? Was it the 'wonder' of a merely idle curiosity or was it the striving of the soul to find release from an intolerable burden of contradiction in thought and life?

By the time Indian religious thought becomes philosophically valuable it may be regarded as the answer to profound spiritual questioning on the part of men in whom a full sense of the gravity of the religious problem has been developed. Indeed this sense of gravity may be described not only as full but as excessive, and almost pessimistic. The solution which is searched for is from the first of the nature of a remedy: it is a deliverance from sorrow rather than a support of joy; and it is sought for with the intensity which we associate with the longing of the religious man for salvation.

Now it would seem that some explanation of this darkening of the problem is necessary, for when we look farther back still to the pre-philosophical period of the earliest religious records in the *Ṛig-Veda* we find an entirely different setting for religious speculation. The religion of the Vedas is for the most part a religion of joy, an expression of delight in being alive in a great and glorious world. The impressive phases of nature are taken as the objects of religious worship—centres about which mythological fancy could group legends of an awe-inspiring but not terrifying character ; and the worship itself was a cheerful one, directed towards the powers of nature in their benignant aspects. Traces of fear may indeed be noticed due to the intermittent appearance of the influence of earlier animistic beliefs, but the persistent attitude is confidence and not terror, hope and not despair. What, then, is the reason of the change from the earlier Vedic period to the later philosophic attitude ? Can we discover in the Veda itself any indications of the direction in which religious thought afterwards moved ?

For the support of the statement that Vedic religion is a religion of joy we may first of all recall a few of its leading features. The heaven, the air, and the earth are the three regions of the gods ; from the union of heaven and earth the other gods and the world emerge. Dyaus—the sky—is amongst the earliest of the gods, and the slight personification of the sky which is indicated in him is carried further with other deities, such as Varuṇa, Sūrya, Savitṛi, &c. Varuṇa is probably to be identified with the Greek *οὐρανός*,[1] the encompassing sky.

[1] Dr. Oldenburg disputes the identification of Varuṇa with *οὐρανός*, and says he is most probably to be identified with the moon. The qualities assigned to Varuṇa would correspond to a certain extent with this identification,

He is the source of steadfastness, he is the path of the sun, and the winds of heaven are his breath. The natural processes of the earth are of his causing, and, most important of all, he is all-seeing. 'He knows the path of the birds that fly through heaven and, sovran of the sea, he knows the ships that are thereon. He knows the pathway of the wind, the spreading, high and mighty wind. He knows the gods that dwell above.' It is to this character, applied in various directions, that we may ascribe the degree of ethical aspiration he was able to evoke, the hymns addressed to Varuṇa forming the most elevated ethically in the Veda.

A further movement in the direction of the concrete may be traced in the worship of Sūrya, whose connection with the sun is always emphasized. A closely allied deity is Savitṛi, interesting even at the present day as the deity invoked in the famous Gāyatrī couplet, repeated by every pious Hindu at the commencement of his morning prayer: 'May we attain that excellent glory of Savitṛi, the god, that he may stimulate our thoughts.' Ushas, the radiant goddess of the Dawn, is celebrated in many hymns of great beauty. Shining in the borrowed light of her lover, Sūrya, she awakens the joy of the morning, calling forth the glad songs of the birds and putting to flight the terrors of darkness. One of the most interesting of the Vedic gods of the upper regions is Vishnu, but he is interesting for historical reasons and in view of his later importance rather than on account of the place he holds in the Vedic pantheon. Here he is a deity of quite secondary importance to whom only infrequent prayers are addressed. Already, however, we find mention of the three strides he takes over the heavens, and there is also a hint of the later doctrine of incarnation for the good of humanity which we find

emphasized in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Another important deity of this group is the goddess Aditi, typifying the over-arching sky, and interesting as showing a tendency towards abstraction and unification of the gods. She is represented as the mother of a group of gods, called Ādityas, of whom Varuṇa is the most important. She also shares some of the moral characteristics of Varuṇa.

The gods of the middle region, or the atmosphere, are mainly personifications of wind, rain, and storm. Indra—described by Monier Williams as 'undoubtedly the principal deity of Vedic worship'—is the centre of much mythology, and his influence is regarded as almost entirely beneficent. He is the slayer of demons, liberator of the waters from the control of the demon of drought. He is also the hero of a legend according to which he sends Saramā, the Dawn, to recover the rays of light which have been stolen by the powers of darkness. From his character as a slayer of demons it naturally follows that Indra should be the god of war.

Amongst the subordinate gods of the atmosphere is Rudra, the terrible one, the god of the thunderbolt. He is not, however, entirely maleficent, and is invoked to bestow blessings upon men and care for their welfare. In the course of development, however, his terrible qualities become overwhelmingly important, and his benevolent qualities are almost forgotten. Further personifications of atmospheric forces are the Maruts, or Storm-gods—Vāta the god of wind, and Parjanya the god of the rain-cloud.

The principal deities of the earth are Agni, Soma, and Yama. Agni is the personification of the sacrificial fire, and the anthropomorphism of the conception is slight. Sometimes he is called 'the son of strength,' because of the strength expended

in the friction by which he is produced. He is also designated as the youngest of the gods, because he is born anew whenever the fire is kindled at the time of sacrifice. It is not perhaps strictly correct to describe him as merely a terrestrial deity. Sometimes a three-fold birth is attributed to him—in heaven, air, and earth—and his qualities would seem to be to a certain extent interchangeable with those of Sūrya and Indra, the three forming a kind of trinity, bound together through their connection with fire and light.

The oblation of the juice of the Soma plant (not now identifiable) was the chief element in the Soma sacrifice. The characteristics of the god Soma are borrowed from the magical and medicinal qualities of the Soma juice, and sometimes even its yellow colour leads to the assimilation of this god with the sun. Later on, however, he is identified with the moon, and its waning is explained as due to the drinking of the juice by the gods.

The personification of the god Yama is carried to a considerable extent. He is the god of death, but the conception of him is, at first in any case, by no means sombre. He was the first to find out the way to the world beyond, and, in virtue of his claims as pioneer, he now rules as chief of the blessed dead, governing a heaven of material happiness. Cf. *Ṛig-Veda*, 10. 14: 'Yama first discovered the path for us. This path will not be destroyed for us. All men go to him. He takes men of virtuous deeds to the realm of happiness.' There are, indeed, certain perils to be gone through before we can reach the realm of Yama, and he himself is described as jealous of easy attainment of immortality on the part of men, but on the whole the conception of him in the Vedas is that of a kindly deity, the dispenser of bliss in the realms of the departed.

It is only later—in the Puranic age—that he becomes a god of almost altogether terrifying aspect.

The emergence of attempts at explanation of the creative process leads to a certain deification of the process itself, and gods of a more abstract character thus come into view. Creative activity, which is originally a characteristic of many of the gods, becomes personified as a distinct god, separate from and often superior to the other gods, thus e.g. we have Prajāpati, the name given to the Creator, and there are many allied names expressing the same group of ideas. Sometimes attention is concentrated upon what might be called the material cause of the world, and in this connection we have the conception of Purusha, a mighty giant who passively submits to be dismembered in order to the production of the world. The *purusha* hymn is probably one of the latest hymns in the *Ṛig-Veda*, but it is at the same time one of the earliest expressions of pantheistic thought. Later on the deity is conceived of less materially and less passively, and more active creative deities become the objects of worship. The distinction emerges between the material cause and the efficient cause. The material cause is described by the term 'wood,' almost prophetic of Aristotelian treatment. We find traces of a deity called Viśvakarman who creates the world out of passive material (cf. *Ṛig-Veda*, 10. 81–82). A more poetical conception is that of Hiraṇyagarbha, or 'germ of gold,' imagined as floating on the primaeval waters (cf. *Ṛig-Veda*, 10. 82 and 121). Activity of a creative character is also associated with the god Virāj, but probably Prajāpati is the deity who most generally expresses the idea. These creative gods, both in their passive and active aspects, play a most important part in later Indian philosophy.

The Vedic religion is, as has been said, a religion of light and gladness. Occasionally the gods may be the objects of terror, but this is not their prevailing characteristic, and the attitude towards them is for the most part one of joyous trust. It perhaps indicates a somewhat easily satisfied materialism (cf. 1. 131, 'Lead thou us, O Agni, to increasing riches; endow us with thy strength-bestowing favour'; and, again (1. 48. 2): 'O Ushas, waken up for me the sounds of joy, send us the riches of the great. Grant us a dwelling wide and free from foes. O goddess, give us food with kine'). The gods may be kept in good-humour by sacrifice; they are interested in all the particular concerns of their worshippers, and are the sharers of their social joys. Occasionally they show a certain amount of jealousy of mortals, but usually they are well-disposed, and under their benign rule men may live a life of innocence and brightness. The leading motive in mythological construction seems to be to show the triumph of the benignant processes of nature over the destructive. There are indeed malignant demons, but when they appear they meet a force in nature ready and able to overwhelm them. There is no consciousness that life is an evil thing. There is, on the contrary, a prevailing optimism—a feeling that it is good to be alive in a world so full of propitious deities.

Nevertheless, it is true that the gladness is somewhat superficial, and in this we have the first hint of the explanation of subsequent development. The joy is not the assured result of struggle. It is rather the happiness of innocence, possible only through an avoidance of the truly spiritual quest. Life did not lead to much searching of soul or to any serious attempt to penetrate beneath the surface. It may be said that this characteristic of careless

joyousness is always discoverable wherever what may be described as the secondary stage of civilization is reached. It is not a characteristic of altogether primitive life under the dominance of animistic religion, when the terror of the ever-present multitude of malignant spirits is far too prevalent to leave much room for joy. But when religious belief has so far overcome these malignant deities through the imagination of beneficent deities more powerful still, we have the emergence of gladness and unquestioning trust like that of a child who in the light of the morning and the presence of protecting friends forgets the terrors of the darkness. Questions as to the permanence of the light and the power of the protectors do not immediately arise, and as long as there is confidence there is happiness.

When such is the prevalent mood of a people, we cannot expect any deep development of the moral sense. Deussen speaks with a certain amount of justification of the 'moral deficiency of the Rig-vedic age.'[1] In most of the hymns the deepest moral fault is some omission or error in sacrificial ceremony by which the benefit may be prevented from reaching the worshipper. The general religious thought of the Vedic age is secure only through its unconsciousness of the deeper problems of the moral life.

Still, there are here and there elements of a more sombre character, indicating a deeper ethical consciousness. As the experience of life becomes fuller and more complex, primitive confidence is bound to disappear. Dr. Barnett says that Varuṇa and his cognate deities, Mitra, Aryaman, and Savitṛi, are 'the living genii of the sky who sustain, stimulate, and guide the bustling world under a rule of law that is half-way to morality. Varuṇa

[1] *Outlines*, p. 13.

especially has become the counterpart of an earthly king sitting in a heavenly palace, directing the ordinances of nature, and maintaining by his judgments the rule of law in the world of men.'[1] In the hymns addressed to this deity there is much questioning of heart and frequent confession of sin: cf. 'O Varuṇa, keep unrighteousness away from us, deliver us from the sins we have committed'; and again, 'O Varuṇa, with an anxious heart I ask thee about my sins' (7. 86. 3). This consciousness of sin is not, however, necessarily consciousness of sin in the ordinary sense of the term. The sin confessed is rather ceremonial than moral, as seems to be indicated by 7. 89. 5: 'In whatever way we have sinned against the gods, in whatever manner we have through ignorance *neglected thy work*,[2] oh do not destroy us for these sins.' It will be noticed also that they are sins of ignorance and error rather than sins of wilfulness. In fact, wilful sin is explicitly repudiated: cf. 7. 86: 'All this sin is not wilfully committed by us. Error or wine, anger or dice, or even thoughtlessness, has begotten sin.' Consequently the plea for mercy is not born of true ethical repentance; it is only 'half-way to morality.' It is a somewhat craintive pleading that the error should be overlooked, because it is only an error and nothing more. It is a cry of helplessness that we hear, rather than of ethical despair, and it is drawn from the suppliant through the need which he feels for coming to terms with an overwhelming power, capable of destroying him, in whose presence he must tremble 'even like a cloud driven by the wind.' Thus, the pain arising from the felt need of confession does not carry its

[1] *Heart of India*, p. 11.

[2] Another translation, 'violated thy law,' might give a stronger ethical meaning here.

own healing with it. It does not result in ethical reinstatement, but only in a fear of consequences. It is a disturbance of confidence which does not succeed in being more than a disturbance. We can hardly, therefore, agree with Barth's assertion that 'with Varuṇa the religion of the Veda goes down to the depths of the conscience and realizes the idea of holiness.'[1] The sinner does not participate in the true ethical reaction. He does not feel that, having got rid of the burden of his guilt, his force as an individual is increased. What is increased is only the sense of helplessness in the presence of overwhelming might. A truly ethical sense of sin connects itself with the idea of freedom. Real sin-consciousness is a consciousness of responsibility for certain actions in the past and of power to avoid similar actions in the future. It has therefore—and this is the relevant consideration for our present purpose—an element of hope in it. On the other hand, the consciousness of ceremonial error, due to ignorance, does not imply more than the idea that we have to do with a somewhat arbitrary power who has not adequately revealed to us the terms of the relationship, and in whose presence we can safely maintain ourselves only by somewhat abject supplications for mercy. Further, the consciousness of sin in these hymns is not properly an individual consciousness, but rather a race consciousness. One of the Varuṇa hymns runs, 'O Varuṇa, deliver us from the sins of our fathers.' We have to do with a heritage of terror in these exceptional hymns, rather than with faults of the individual, and this absence of a sense of individual responsibility and consequent absence of an incentive to personal struggle probably explains why the slight ethical tendency revealed in these hymns was not able to

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 17.

maintain itself as a separate thought-tradition, working, through disturbance of confidence, to deliverance and victory. The consciousness of truly moral defect was not able to develop itself, and was overshadowed by the dread of ceremonial error. Thus the somewhat gloomy aspect in which the god Varuṇa appears in these hymns, even though it be exceptional to the general spirit of the Veda, is not counteracted at the beginning, and so serves only to reinforce other more implicit influences not at first obvious, but at the same time working destructively against the early careless confidence and joy. Some of these implicit tendencies we must now proceed to consider.

The logical outcome of certain tendencies of Vedic thought was a growing sense of the helplessness of the individual and of the poverty and wretchedness of his life in the presence of universal forces. It is a natural development of thought, aided perhaps by the persistence of magical ideas drawn from lower and more primitive religions. As thought proceeds from polytheism in the direction of Pantheism the insignificance of the individual life becomes more apparent. Its diversities and confusions become more striking in contrast with the one and permanent reality of which a dim consciousness begins to emerge. The path from polytheism to Pantheism is one which the Hindu mind has often travelled, and the journey seems to have become easier with the centuries; but the direction was indicated even in Vedic times. There is in all peoples an implicit consciousness that above the popular gods there is one eternal and unfathomable unity, and there is a constant seeking after this unity. So we are not surprised to find, even in the primitive times which Max Müller describes as 'the period of chaotic thought, half

poetical, half religious, which preceded the age of philosophy so-called,' a growing discontent with the diversity of the objects of worship.

We have here to deal not so much with direct philosophic teaching as with a semi-popular tendency in the direction of abstract pantheistic unity. First of all we may notice the slight degree of personification which is applied to the Vedic deities. They have not definitely distinguishable characters, but are to a very large extent simply names by which natural processes may be denoted, and the same natural process may have several names associated with it. From this it follows that the characteristics and functions of the gods are easily interchangeable. Instead of different gods representing different qualities, the qualities are combined, and one god is taken to represent a group of qualities. The process might then be described as one of generalization. The gods are seen to possess common qualities, and from this it is an easy step to substantialize the common qualities and declare that the gods are one in essence. One of the gods may be found to be the most complete embodiment of the essence and to be worthy therefore of supreme regard. Then the further step is taken of regarding this ' essential god ' as the ground or source out of which the other gods emerged or of which the other gods were only various names. We may compare, in this connection, the formula ' Agni is all the gods.' The result of the process is a system of exchange of qualities. Each god may become identical with any other god, and may attain also to supreme regard, gathering up the qualities of the other gods in himself. Hunt thus describes the process : ' Every deity is, in the first instance, a natural object ; it is then invested with all the powers in nature, it has

ascribed to it all the qualities of all things cognizable by the senses, and thus it becomes the supreme god, constituting the all of nature.' [1] Max Müller applies to the process the term 'henotheism,' by which he designates a system of belief under which the god is, for the time being, arbitrarily taken as supreme, whereas at another time another god may receive this honour. The term 'chrematheism' might also be used to denote the arbitrary character of the selection, according to which that deity is taken as supreme which is of most use to the worshipper. The question immediately arises whether we can get beyond the view indicated by henotheism and chrematheism, and reach a position from which a deity may be regarded as supreme, not merely by the selection of the worshipper, but, as it were, in his own right. Barth answers this question in the negative, and regards the henotheistic position as ultimate, denying a permanent hierarchy amongst the gods. 'Supreme sovereignty belongs to several. We find at one time absolute supremacy, and at another time subordination ascribed to the same god. As soon as a new god is invoked, all the others suffer eclipse before him, and he attracts every attribute to himself, and the notion, at one time monotheistic and at another time pantheistic, comes in this way, like a sort of moveable quantity, to be ascribed indiscriminately to the different personalities furnished by the myths.' [2]

It may be questioned, however, whether such a shifting pantheon is ultimately satisfying even to the minds of the composers of the Vedas. Such a verse as, 'Firm is the seat of Varuṇa—over the seven he rules as king—let all the others die away' (8. 41. 10), indicates a craving for more permanent sovereignty, and their speculative genius also points

[1] *Pantheism*, p. 6. [2] *Religions of India*, p. 25.

in the direction of a more permanent unity, not perhaps explicitly stated or indicated by an undetachable name, but still regarded as the goal of thought. This search for unity and the tendency towards an absolute monism may be traced back even to the Vedic period. We may agree with Barth that there is no permanent hierarchy, and even go beyond his position and deny that the tendency is towards monotheism. The process of thought is more abstract—towards a somewhat characterless unity. It is towards monism rather than towards monotheism, but, if the tendency is thus more accurately defined, its presence is unmistakable.

We may go on to notice other ways in which the distinction between the various deities is breaking down even in Vedic times. The grouping of the gods in different pairs and trinities has itself an effect. We have the primal Dyaus and Prithivī, and the trinity of Sūrya, Indra, and Agni (whom Yāska about 500 B.C. takes to be representative of the whole Vedic pantheon). Gods are also grouped according to locality, as the gods of the sky, the air, and the earth.

In the third hymn of the first book we meet already with the curious conception of *Visvedevas*, or all-gods. This may mean a special group of gods, or it may mean all the gods collectively. In the latter case it would be the equivalent of the Latin *cuncti* rather than of *omnes*, and would anticipate the German *Gesammtgötter*. Some authorities take the conception to be a priestly manufacture invented in order to ensure that none of the gods will be omitted in laudations expressly intended for all the gods. The Visve gods are the 'unassorted' gods to which no special name has been given. But any one of the interpretations would seem to show that the conception indicates

a primitive mental effort to express the unity, always struggling against diversity, of the forces on which man ultimately depends.

The physical universality of the objects worshipped also assists in the progress towards a pantheistic unity. Especially is this the case with the gods of the sky and the air, who seem to be combined in the mind of the worshipper so as to produce a feeling of spatial immensity, overshadowing and all-embracing and all-pervading. Aditi typifies this material infinity. This deity is described as 'whatever has been and whatever shall be born.' The all-comprehensiveness of the air is also emphasized—it reaches as one universal element to the corners of the world. The same idea of all-inclusive and all-productive substance appears in the attempts at creative explanation to which we have already alluded. The conception of *purusha* is that of one substance from which all things in the world are produced. We have already traced the development from merely material cause to efficient cause through the conceptions of Prajāpati, Visvekarman, Hiraṇyagarbha, and Virāj, and we should notice that, throughout, the effort has been to reduce the materials and forces of the world to a single explanatory principle. It is the effort after monism, an ultimate conception in which the creator shall be not only the king of the gods, but himself the All.

We must not imagine, however, that such a progress of thought towards unity is at all widespread. The influence of implicit philosophy reduces the number and increases the dignity of the gods, perhaps even elevating one to the rank of the supreme, but it does not necessarily follow that the popularity of the god increases with the growth of his dignity, or that he becomes unpopular as he is degraded to lower rank. The tendency is rather

the other way. The universal gods have lost such traces of individuality as they possessed, and do not now call forth the mythopaeic fancy which has been described as the 'surest test of man's love for his gods.' As the circle of the connections of a god with other gods widens, faith in him becomes somewhat vague. He is too vast and incomprehensible to excite the interest of humanity. Hopkins points out that Varuṇa, e.g., is 'no longer a popular god in the *Ṛig-Veda*. He has become a god of speculation.' For popularity a god must be the embodiment of some near physical force, or he must be invested with the characteristics of concrete human personality such as those ascribed later to Indra. As he attains to the universality which satisfies the mystic and the philosopher, he loses the basis of his appeal to the masses.

We have traced various movements from polytheism in the direction of pantheistic unity, and we shall, we think, be justified in saying that in these tendencies is to be found the explanation of the gloom which overshadows the earliest philosophic thought. By the time we reach the Upanishads a full sense of the gravity of life's problems has been developed. As the number of the gods decreased, and their immensity and overpowering might increased, the contrast became more and more apparent between the fleeting circumstances of human life and the reality which lay darkly hidden behind these circumstances. The search after unity and the clearer revelation of it to thought threw into stronger relief the diversities and confusions of human nature. In one aspect, indeed, human vexations might appear to be trifling, but this would not be the immediate result. The first effect of the contact between philosophical speculation and human experience would be to increase the sense

of the intolerableness of life. Men become more acutely conscious of the imperfections of their lot when they have some great conceptions wherewith they may contrast these imperfections. In plain language, it may be said that the gods were being removed to a great distance from the worshipper. They were no longer the homely, familiar deities who captured the popular fancy. For this reason the world became somewhat empty for the ordinary man who was left with only a few rather uninteresting deities, while doubts had been cast upon the value of the popular gods towards whom his worship would naturally have gone forth. The demand for unity seems to be the outcome of cold speculation and could satisfy this alone. For the ordinary man and his fellow-worshippers there was little left. Moreover, the characteristics of physical universality and immensity which, as we have seen, assisted the minds of the worshippers in their search after unity, became emphasized the nearer this goal was approached, the result being that the more awe-inspiring aspects of the popular gods overshadowed those which might otherwise have evoked general confidence. The contrast between the immensity of the divine and the little lives of men thus became more and more pointed. The sky was the all-embracing, the air was the all-pervading, and the sun was the light before which all other lights grew dim. Besides, the sky, the air, and the sun were permanent, and, along with the everlasting hills and the ever-flowing rivers, made men feel more than ever that they themselves were only the children of a day. A French writer, in reference to the people of Brittany, says, ' Les âmes sont graves et resignées, comme sous l'oppression du double infini de la mer et de ciel.' This oppression is soon discovered in Indian thought, and perhaps here also

it is the oppression of a double infinite, the boundless monotony of the plains taking the place of the sea of Brittany.

We may notice also the gradual destruction of easy-going satisfaction with materialistic happiness. Prayers for riches, food, and kine are a constant refrain in the Vedas, and in abundance of good things joy and wealth and strength consist.[1] But the developing spirit of the race could not be satisfied thus. The onward movement of thought brought with it a craving for more spiritual satisfaction, and as this craving could not be so easily satisfied, the first result was a mood of disappointment. Attempts at an explanation of the problems of life might bring also another cause of disquiet. In primitive polytheism the explanation of evil lies near at hand. It is due to demons who are powerful indeed, but who may be overcome by still more powerful gods.[2] With the unification of the gods and the belief in one universal cause the possibility of such an explanation is taken away. Evil has to be traced back to the universal cause, and thus becomes for the worshipper a burden from which there is no relief, because it is bound up with the universal cause and shares in a world necessity.

Now this burden of evil is the more depressing because it is not properly recognized as evil. It is vaguely conceived as a grim oppressive reality, and there is no 'thinking through' to an adequate solution. We may associate this failure to reach an adequate solution with two causes. One is the slightly developed sense of ethical personality which we have already alluded to in connection with the

[1] Cf. 7. 74. 2 : 'To great plenty, O Dawn, promote us. Vouchsafe us manifold and splendid riches.' Cf. also 1. 43. 4., 48. 15., 7. 1. 5. 7. 18. 2.

[2] Cf. 1. 36. 14 : 'O Indra, with thy flame burn every ravening demon dead.'

Varuṇa hymns. The lack of a sense of responsibility and ethical freedom means that evil and misery are not regarded as to any extent intelligible and conquerable by human effort. Their incidence upon human life must be attributed to the universal cause, and the result is a sense on the one hand of the helplessness of man and on the other of the mysterious, alien and somewhat oppressive power of God.

The reconciliation of God and man through a sense of spiritual kinship is further prevented by the persistence of ideas borrowed from a lower stratum of belief. The idea of magic is by no means absent from the Vedas, and it is an idea which is associated with priestcraft and degradation of the worshipper. The hidden forces of the world are regarded as a fluid and semi-material reality which the worshipper, by means of certain rites and incantations, may participate in and thus obtain divine power through a process of physical absorption. In one hymn of the first book we come across an appeal to Agni to aid when the worshippers call upon him with 'unguents and with priests.' This idea of sacrificial materialistic participation is of a lower order, and is perhaps most apparent in connection with the god Soma. The Soma juice has miraculous properties, conferring might upon both gods and men. Indra is exhorted to drink the Soma juice in order to increase his might, and in 1. 56. 1 we have the line, 'The Soma juice which strengthens for great deeds.'

Now it may be contended that this conception of a world-reality consisting of some kind of magical fluid in which we may physically participate, with the attendant emphasis upon sacrifice and incantation, confines the human spirit to the materialistic level and has an ultimately depressing effect. Be-

fore it can be spiritualized it becomes oppressive. Religious satisfaction can be reached only by emphasizing the lower aspects of human nature—by emphasizing physical participation. This probably had from the first a negative and ascetic tinge, due to the purely empirical discovery that ecstatic and apparently religious conditions could be induced by fasting and mortification of the body. The negative tendency is further developed when there is the slightest awakening of a sense of higher faculties in the human spirit. Religious satisfaction appears now as the negation of these higher faculties. World reality is still materialistically conceived, and thus appears as an alien force, correspondence with which can be gained only by a denial of the essential characteristics of humanity. It is the support of the lower physical elements only, and the negation of what man is beginning dimly to regard as the most valuable part of his own nature. Here we have the germ of the negative idea which permeates the whole of Indian philosophy—the idea that communion with the divine consists essentially in denial of the chief factors in human experience.

It seems impossible to eradicate this negative idea when once it has crept in. It spreads itself over all parts of human experience. If religious satisfaction is at first sought in the negation of the higher faculties and their reduction to a state of 'cataleptic insensibility,' it is but a short onward step to find this satisfaction in the denial of human experience altogether. If the reality of the universe is regarded as alien to our higher experience, it easily comes to be regarded as alien to our experience altogether. With the advance of thought the ultimate reality may cease to be regarded as material, but the effect of the original magical conception still remains, and we are no nearer a reconciliation

of the human spirit with the divine. In ceasing to be material, it has, through the influence of purely intellectual as distinct from ethical speculation, become merely an abstraction. The religious longing still goes out towards it, but, seeing that the ultimate being is purely abstract, the religious ideal of communion can be reached only by deliverance from the conditions of human life, and not by elevation and completion of these conditions. We are now within sight of the later-developed conceptions of Saṁsāra and Karma and Mukti, all of them indicating that the world of human experience is a ceaseless meaningless round—'a bondage of everlasting sorrow,' which we may escape from, but over which we can never hope to obtain the victory. We have failed to establish the worth of human personality and through it to obtain an interpretation of the Divine Reality. It is this longing for deliverance rather than salvation in the full sense of the term which the philosophical thought of the Upanishads sets itself to satisfy; but we shall be satisfied here with indicating the sources of the longing and with characterizing it as the combined and significant result of tendencies which go far to explain the transition from the joyousness and confidence of Vedic religion to the serious and almost gloomy setting of the problem for Indian thought.

One or two other points may be referred to before we leave this topic. The doctrine of transmigration seems to have crept into Indian thought between the Vedic period and the period of the Upanishads. The teaching of the Vedas on this point is for the most part elaboration of the idea of simple reward or retribution in a continuous life in the next world. The righteous will live in happiness under the rule of Yama and the wicked will be cast into the abyss. Sometimes the future

life is depicted rather sensually, but in passages like *Ṛig-Veda* v. 9–13 it rises to a more spiritual level. If the doctrine of transmigration appears at all, it is only by way of vague hints. In the *Ṛig-Veda* x. i. 6. 5 we have the idea of the dispersion of the parts of the human body, 'The Sun receive thine eye, the Wind thy spirit; go, as thy merit is, to earth or heaven. Go, if it be thy lot, into the waters. Go, make thy home in plants with all thy members.' Again, in the 58th hymn of the same book, we have the description of wanderings to the 'four-cornered earth,' the sea, the mountains, the waters, the plants, of 'the spirit that went far away.' It is obvious that here we have evidence of a belief in immortality coupled with more or less detailed imagination of the lot of the soul in the other world; but Deussen is probably right, regarding these and other passages, that 'in no Vedic text can the doctrine of the soul's transmigration be certainly traced.'

In the *Atharva-Veda* and the Brāhmaṇas the details of life in the other world become fuller and the germs of a doctrine of transmigration appear. In these writings there seems to be a growing fear of falling into the power of death, and this is a point of the utmost importance in the present connection. The emphasis seems to be laid not on a series of lives but on a series of deaths, and in this we may perhaps see the effects of the growing tendency to negation which we have already noticed.

Now it was not difficult to transfer the idea of a series of future lives from another world to this world, especially as the way was prepared for such transference by a similar belief found very generally amongst savage tribes. Indeed the common opinion seems to be that the introduction of the doctrine into Indian thought is due to borrowing from alien

sources and to the influence of a lower civilization upon the Aryan settlers. Even at the present day the Sonthals of India hold the belief that the souls of the good pass into fruit-bearing trees, and probably the primitive belief was of a somewhat similar character. It is not, however, probable that the Aryans received the doctrine in any very developed form, and the elaboration of the theory of a chain of existences was left to the philosophers of the incoming race and was by them connected closely with the idea of retribution. Even in the Upanishads we have traces of syncretism in connection with the doctrine. A curious double system of retribution is referred to. Some by way of the 'path of the gods' reach absorption in Brahman; others by the 'path of the fathers' return to this world to assume in the series of existences the particular forms appropriate to their actions in previous lives. It should be noticed that Max Müller refuses to believe that the doctrine of transmigration was borrowed from alien sources. He thinks that the theory is so natural that it may well have arisen in different races, and he points out that traces of the theory are to be found amongst primitive people in all parts of the world. In support of such a position we may notice recent parallel arguments intended to prove that the Pythagorean doctrine was derived entirely from a Greek source.

Deussen prefers to regard the theory as a perfectly natural development within Indian thought itself, indicative of a modification of the idealism of Indian philosophy by the introduction of more concrete and easily grasped conceptions. Still, there does seem to be a certain antithesis between this conception and the negative mystical Pantheism which we have seen to be characteristic of the earliest beginnings of Indian philosophical thought; and the

antithesis is better explained by a borrowing from alien sources than by simple internal development. The negative tendency cannot overcome the positive idea of persistence, and the positive natural craving for life is strengthened by floating popular ideas of a series of lives.

But it is the influence of the negative on the positive aspect of the matter to which we may trace the depressing effect which the doctrine of transmigration came to exercise. It may have been originally introduced for purposes of consolation and reward and to satisfy the early emergence of a desire for individual persistence. When, however, escape is the end aimed at, this simple desire for immortality loses its force. If this life is regarded as undesirable, a succession of lives merely multiplies the misery. Escape becomes a much more difficult matter when an almost infinite succession of lives has to be reckoned with. Rewards are lost sight of and attention is concentrated on darker sides of the matter. And, as the idea of reward becomes shadowy, that of punishment gains in concreteness and force. Thus the idea of transmigration, when combined with the idea of emancipation, becomes a directly pessimistic influence, and, in the combination, the desire for emancipation is greatly strengthened until it becomes an almost intolerable longing. Annihilation at the end of one life becomes a comfortable thought when compared with the prospect which now opens up for men. They are denied even the consolation of the thought of the *City of Dreadful Night*:

> This life holds nothing good for us;
> But it ends soon, and never more can be;
> And we know nothing of it ere our birth,
> And can know nothing when consigned to earth.
> I ponder these thoughts, and they comfort me.

Of course, besides these semi-religious tendencies other influences were at work increasing the sense of the gravity of the problems which were pressing for philosophical solution. But these hardly call for special consideration, being amongst the most general conditions of human life in every country. We may notice, however, that in India the contrast between wealth and poverty, between despotism and helplessness, has in past times been more marked than in other lands. The population has frequently been divided into despots on the one hand, and, on the other, those who were in abject submission to them, and the division between wealth and poverty corresponded pretty closely to the political division. Such contrasts were certainly not so clearly marked in Vedic times, but they may have been making themselves felt by the time philosophical speculation begins. It may not be out of place to mention also the enervating influence of the climate, diminishing the zest for life and disposing men to seek for deliverance rather than development, inducing patient acquiescence rather than persistent struggle.

CHAPTER III

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOLUTION

WHATEVER the causes of the pessimism may be, we soon find it obtaining literary and philosophical expression. In order to study this expression we have to turn to the Upanishads. The place of these books in the general history of Indian literature has already been noticed, and they have been described as standing in the same relation to the Vedas as the New Testament to the Old. Though they are not definitely philosophical treatises, but rather 'pre-eminently exhortations to the spiritual life' (Barth) aiming, as Dr. Thibaut puts it, 'at nothing *less* than at definiteness and coherence,' they yet occupy probably the most important position in the history of Indian philosophical development. They form the transition from the Brāhmaṇas to the regular philosophical systems, and, though they still carry with them marks of their origin in the shape of excessive reference to ritual, nevertheless their value is more prospective than retrospective. They are the sources from which, with comparatively little transformation, the main ideas of the Vedānta are drawn, and the Vedānta is admittedly the dominant Indian philosophy. But the elements which they supply to other systems of thought also are neither few nor insignificant, and it may thus be claimed for the

Upanishads that the tendencies manifest in them govern the whole subsequent course of Indian philosophical speculation. Their influence upon popular religion is also considerable. All sorts of sects, high as well as low, draw their inspiration from the Upanishads. Barth draws attention to the very widespread character of their popular influence in a quotation to which we shall afterwards have to refer.[1] Their influence upon modern philosophical thought in India, and especially upon the thought of the Brahmo Samaj, has been most marked. Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, the religious reformer of the early nineteenth century, expressed the belief that 'if a selection were made from the Upanishads it would contribute more than any other publication to the religious improvement of the people.' He put them on a pinnacle far above the rest of Indian literature. He regarded them, in Max Müller's words, as 'something different from all the rest, something that should not be thrown away, something that, if rightly understood, might supply the right native soil in which the seeds of true religion, aye of true Christianity, might spring up again and prosper in India.' A later Brahmo writer says: 'The sublime self-assertion of the Upanishads, the rapt mind beholding the spirit of all things in itself, the secret of the whole universe revealed within the soul, the heaven of heavens in the heart, the fire that kindles all fire, the life that breathes itself into all existence, tend to create a glorious idealism before which the hard and hardening world of matter hides its diminished head.'[2]

In the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to show that, by the time philosophical speculation began, the atmosphere of thought was largely

[1] Cf. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 84.
[2] P. C. Majumdar, *Brahmo Samaj*, p. 129.

pessimistic. Some possible causes of this pessimism have been pointed out, and our further inquiry will show that these suggested causes maintain themselves into the philosophical period, and that what were at first merely implicit tendencies acquire in the later centuries the rank of philosophic principles, and are applied in order to provide a solution of the very problems which in their implicit form they have done so much to render acute. Our survey of the pre-philosophical period might lead us to anticipate that the application of principles which have already done duty as causes of pessimism might not assist to any great extent our efforts to obtain deliverance from it, unless indeed the philosophical solution may consist just in a frank recognition of the very difficulties which, first of all, made the necessity of a solution apparent, and unless these principles are found to be, like the angel's spear, capable of healing the very wounds which they themselves have made.

But such anticipations must not be allowed to influence us unduly, and an investigation into the practical effects of the philosophical solution adopted will occupy us at a later stage. We are at present more immediately concerned to show that at the period when the thought of the Upanishads comes into being, life had assumed a sufficiently serious aspect to demand earnest inquiry, and its problems had become so complex as to afford sufficient exercise for even the most ambitious philosophical speculation.

In the preceding period there had been, as we have seen, a growing consciousness of the need for deliverance, and the writers of the Upanishads set themselves avowedly to meet this need. There is a dark background to all their thought. In the period of the Brāhmaṇas men had been able to

subdue the individual gods, but it was only to be the more overwhelmed by the fear of the incomprehensible divine unity, and the chief subject of speculation is the baffling characteristics of the world, both intellectual and moral. From the confusing diversity of human experiences, having unity only in their painfulness, from the unending succession of lives showing little prospect of improvement, where was deliverance to be found? This yearning after deliverance finds repeated expression in the Upanishads. In the *Kaṭha Upanishad* (ii. 4), we have the following: 'A wise man ceases to *grieve* when he knows the great, the all-pervading Self,' and again in the same Upanishad (ii. 6. 7) we read: 'The wise man ceases to grieve when he knows the distinction of the Self from the senses.' The Self which is the object of our striving is free from old age, from death, or grief. It is the homeland of the soul, which a man reaches after many wanderings, in the course of which he has suffered many things. In this Upanishad there are repeated indications that the state we are to flee *from* is one of misery. In the contemplation of the world of finite experience there is nothing but pain. And the reason of this pessimistic attitude is hinted at over and over again. It is the fleeting and unsatisfying character of human experience. We may trace the same ideas running through the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*. Cf. vii. 25. 1: 'There is no bliss in anything finite'; and again, vii. 26. 1: 'He who sees this [the Self] does not see death, nor illness, nor pain.' Here also we find that it is the injustice and the irregularities of the earthly life which prompt to questioning. 'If the body is blind or lame or poverty-stricken, what will be the lot of the Self?' asks Indra in the same Upanishad.

This perplexed, pathetic tone is heard in all the

Upanishads, and its presence seems to indicate the truth of Max Müller's remark, that 'however radiant the dawn of religious thought in the East, it is not without its dark clouds, its dulling cold, its noxious vapours.' We might, indeed, go further, and say that, by the time we reach the philosophical questionings of the Upanishads, the dark clouds have covered the face of the sky, the cold has chilled the hearts of men, and the miasma has begun to poison the very sources of human happiness.

But, it may be said, Why should we draw attention to this pessimistic background as if it were a special characteristic of Indian philosophy alone? Might it not be said that the desire for deliverance is a characteristic of the beginnings of all philosophy, and cannot be assigned as a particular predicate of any? Is not the motive of all philosophy simply a desire to escape from the contradictions and annoyances of life?

In reply it might be said that while all philosophy may be regarded as arising from a certain amount of dissatisfaction, speculative or practical, yet this dissatisfaction varies very much in degree. Where it is excessive, it is well to draw attention to it and to the urgency of its insistence, because in such cases of excess we may see most clearly the influence which the conditions of origin exercise upon the character of the solution. At the same time we may freely admit that it is well to emphasize the universal operation of dissatisfaction as a motive to philosophical investigation. To have this before our minds should prevent us, on the one hand, from entering into full agreement with Deussen when he says that recourse to philosophy as a refuge from pessimism is an evidence of the exhaustion of the philosophic spirit. If by pessimism he here means merely the presence of a certain degree of

dissatisfaction, then his statement becomes somewhat sweeping, for it virtually means that all philosophical investigation is an indication of the exhaustion of the philosophic spirit. On the other hand, consideration of this universal experience of distress should warn us from the other extreme, toward which Max Müller seems in danger of running when he relieves the philosophy under consideration of the charge of pessimism on the ground that a philosophy 'which professes its ability to remove pain can hardly be called pessimistic in the ordinary sense of the word.' But the real question is one rather of performance than of profession—the mere facing of problems does not necessarily include the successful solution of them.

It must, however, be admitted that any considerable pressure of pessimistic ideas *does* exercise a demoralizing influence both practically and theoretically. Chesterton, in his volume on Dickens, points out that the pessimist is never so good a reformer as the optimist; and the truth of this in the practical sphere is abundantly illustrated in the conservatism of the general Indian attitude to life. Excessive pessimism engenders a sense of futility—the foe of all effort in ordinary life.

But even in the theoretical sphere the unfortunate influence of an excessively gloomy preliminary conception of the problems to be solved may be traced. The pessimism of the Indian philosopher is not easily shaken off when he betakes himself to abstract thought. It has impressed itself too deeply upon his mind, and he is inclined to allow his thoughts to move away too easily and quickly from the actual world of experience and to regard it as lying in hopeless confusion. His pessimism is at the outset so strong that he hardly dares to hope for victory: he can only sigh for deliverance. He does not

expect much in the way of positive help, and this practical despair influences his speculative philosophy and often goes a long way towards determining its character. Philosophy is expected to provide a means of release rather than a system of constructive thought.[1] The pessimism of the Indian philosopher has often been too much for his solution of the world-problem. It has been so strong as almost to make him take for granted the insolubility of the problem or find a solution in what is virtually a confession of insolubility.

There is perhaps another point at which excessive pessimism exercises an adverse influence upon philosophical speculation. If it is obsessed by a feeling of misery, the human consciousness is apt to be left with insufficient freedom for pure and independent speculation, and a demand for rapid solution of problems becomes insistent. The weight of the burden is so great that one must hasten to get rid of it. Perhaps here we find one reason for that mixture—or even confusion—of purely speculative with religious and ethical motives which is constantly found in Indian philosophy. As has been said, 'It was no mere search for truth for truth's sake.' Of course, one is far from demurring, especially in India, from any practical application of philosophy, and any one who possesses a faith in the unity of human experience must admit that the philosophical and religious motives must ultimately coincide; but, at the same time, the point to be insisted on here is that, if practical and emotional needs are too urgent, there is often a temptation to hasten unduly to a solution of a speculative problem. Further, it is often a consequence that, instead of being solved, the difficulties of the problem are merely concealed in a mystical haze. The human

[1] Cf. Monier Williams, *Religious Thought and Life*, p. 56.

mind, consumed with a desire for deliverance and not unfamiliar with the claims of mystical intuition, becomes unduly receptive, and arguments which are admittedly not cogent from an intellectual standpoint, are accepted under the influence of religious motives and practical needs. One result of such a tendency which we should carefully note is the prevalent acceptance in India of the doctrine of two orders of knowledge so different from one another that sometimes what is true in one sphere may be untrue in the other. This fondness for the distinction between the esoteric and the exoteric, combined with an exceedingly facile transition from the one standpoint to the other, is both dangerous in itself and disastrous to the completeness of a philosophy. It is, however, a very present help in times of logical trouble.

From what has been said we may see the justice of a reference to the pessimistic background of Indian philosophy. It is more than the 'divine discontent' from which all philosophy springs. It is a sense of weariness and lassitude, the influence of which never entirely disappears. There is a considerable amount of truth in M. Chailley's description of Indian philosophy as a 'Pantheism which springs from lassitude and a desire for eternal rest.' [1]

We are now in a position to advance to a more positive treatment of the general characteristics of the philosophical solution which is offered. We should be passing an unjust judgment if we were to think that the acuteness of the sense of need prevented any real speculative interest. Though the intense desire for relief was dominant, and was, as just indicated, prejudicial in a measure to genuine philosophical search, yet it could not crush out

[1] *Administrative Problems of British India*, p. 67.

positive construction or stifle a desire for it. In the minds of the deepest thinkers of the period there must have been at least a faint glimmering of the thought that the world they saw around them was not merely something to be escaped from, but also something to be explained. It was not complete in itself. There was some spirit beyond the grasp of sense which moved through the things of nature and also through their own life. What was it, and what was its relation to them and to their world? Sometimes they seemed almost to grasp it as, in intensity of devotion, they recited their sacred hymns. The thrill of enthusiasm seemed to be the movement in them of the divine. They were possessed of a strange mystic harmony binding themselves, God, and the universe into one. What was this mystery that surrounded them? Surely they could penetrate into it a little way. In this sense of mystery and the desire to penetrate it their philosophy in the strictest sense of the term arose. This is a continuation of the spirit of which already hints have been found in the Vedas—a desire to get to the regions beyond experience 'to where the other side of the sun is seen.'[1] It is the spirit underlying all attempts at explanatory mythology and now arriving at more adequate philosophical form. The conception of the giant Purusha of the Veda and his literal dismemberment is transformed into a search after the primal principle and its evolution in the detail of phenomena. The speculative note which is struck in the Vedas becomes much more dominant in the Upanishads. The very word *Upanishad* seems to indicate speculative intentness. The most generally accepted meaning is that of 'session'—the sitting round a teacher in order to receive instruction. And there are allied

[1] *Rig-Veda*, ix. 113. 10.

meanings, probably without much etymological foundation, the acceptance of which at least indicates the function which the Upanishads were popularly supposed to perform. Sometimes the meaning of 'secret doctrine' is assigned, and, again, the meanings of 'destruction' and 'approach'; the idea underlying all usages being that of a doctrine which, received from a teacher, opens a way of approach to God and destroys all error. Perhaps, also, it might be pointed out that the negative state from which deliverance was sought was conceived of after an intellectual manner. It was not merely a state of misery: it was a state of error, and, conversely, what was desired was truth which could be speculatively established. The character of the solution which is sought for presupposes a very considerable degree of intellectual development, and intellectual interests are never lost sight of, even though we may not be able to go so far as Barth and say that the Upanishads are 'much more instinctive with the spirit of speculative daring than the sense of suffering and weariness.' [1]

Further, the circumstances in which the Upanishads were composed were favourable to pure speculation. The inquiries which they record belong expressly to a period of life when practical interests were no longer supreme, when the active duties of the householder had been given over, and there had begun a time of quiet contemplation in the forests, when those who were both learned and aged might gather round some teacher for undistracted study of the ultimate mysteries. Moreover, the free creative spirit which is necessary for all constructive philosophy was decidedly in the ascendant. Although the influence of the Vedas was strong, their authority was not oppressive to such an extent as to

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 84.

limit intellectual activity to a minute consideration of the exact language of ancient philosophical precepts or a ceaseless recapitulation of traditional ideas. While, perhaps, the complete sense of freedom from authority afterwards indicated in the saying of the *Gītā* (ii. 42) that, 'as great as is the use of a well which is surrounded on all sides by overflowing water, so great and no greater is the use of the Vedas to a Brahman endowed with true knowledge,' had not yet been reached, yet there was, especially in the older Upanishads, a realization of liberty sufficient to support a genuine search after truth.

This sense of mystery and the desire to penetrate it is manifested at the very beginning of the *Kaṭha Upanishad*. Nachiketas, having been offered and having refused several boons of a more or less material character, such as wealth and long life, and also some relating to the heavenly life, says, 'No, that on which there is this doubt, O Death, tell us what there is in that great hereafter. Nachiketas does not desire another boon, but that which enters into the hidden world.' And the sense of the unseen is even stronger in the description given in i. 2. 12 of the ultimate being who is the truest self, 'who is difficult to be seen, who has entered into the dark, who is hidden in the cave, who dwells in the abyss.' An ever-recurring refrain in the first few sections of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (probably the oldest sections) is, 'Lead me from darkness into light, from the unreal to the real.' In the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (vi. 2. 5) the question is asked, 'Hast thou sought for the instruction by which also the Unheard becomes heard, the Unintelligible intelligible, and the Unknown known?' and in the same Upanishad the typical teacher is

[1] *Kaṭha Up.* 1. 1. 29.

said to have shown to his pupil ' after all his faults had been rubbed out, the back of the other side of darkness.' [1] When with this genuine speculative interest there is combined the more practical desire for release from the confusions, miseries, and disappointments of the actual world, we have a complex motive of sufficient intensity to carry us far into the region of the unknown.

The solution which is offered is mainly of a negative and mystical character, and consists in an entire transformation of our ordinary attitude to the world. The data of our empirical consciousness are to be regarded as illusory ; the particularity of the world is to be denied ; we are to retire within ourselves, and in finding our true selves we are to find also God, for God and ourselves, or, rather, our *Self*, form ultimately a unity in which all differences are merged. The main teaching of the Upanishads is that of an idealistic Pantheism, which represents the religious movement of the soul impressed by the particularity and confusion of the world—a negative upward movement, unceasing until the absolute unity is reached. The solution of life-problems does not lie in any change which may be wrought on the world, but consists in turning away from the world altogether and regarding it as unreal. The general trend of thought is thus described by Hunt : ' To know that the human intellect and all its faculties are ignorance and delusion, this is to take away the sheath and find that God is all in all. Whatever is not Brahma is nothing. So long as a man perceives himself to be anything, he is ignorant : when he discovers that his supposed individuality is no individuality, then he has knowledge. Brahma is the substance ; we are his image, and the countenance of Brahma

[1] Cf. *Chhāndogya*, vii. 26. 2.

alone remains. Man must strive to rid himself of himself as an object of thought. He must be only a subject, a thought, a joy, an existence. As subject he is Brahma, while the objective world is mere phenomenon, the garment or vesture of God.' [1]

It cannot be denied that the aim of religious and philosophical thought which is here set forth is a high and noble one, and, though in order to reach the goal many crude devices are suggested and many survivals of primitive belief are emphasized, yet the goal itself is never lost sight of, and there is a profound seriousness in the whole endeavour. Long afterwards Śaṅkara was able to say of the study of the Vedānta texts that this was undertaken 'with a view to freeing oneself from that wrong notion which is the cause of all evil and attaining thereby the knowledge of the absolute unity of the self.' [2] This might almost be taken as a description of the aim of the Upanishads.

There are two aspects in the upward movement: (1) denial of the particularity of the world of our ordinary experience, (2) an effort to identify the human spirit with the divine and so to reach an absolute unity. We may treat of the two aspects in turn, always remembering that they cannot be entirely separated; that, in so far as they are treated separately, it is merely for the purposes of exposition, and that in the Indian consciousness they are intimately bound up with one another.

The first step in the teaching of the Upanishads, as it is the first step in many other philosophies, is to distrust the immediate data of the senses. The senses introduce us to the realm of particularity, of objects in space and in time, distracting our interests and exciting individualistic desires. If

[1] *Pantheism*, p. 8.
[2] *Vedānta Sūtras*, Śaṅkara's Commentary, i. 1. 1.

we are to obtain salvation, we must transcend such a world as this, we must shake off every mode of personal existence, and reach 'the fontal unity of undifferenced being.' We must resolutely refuse to admit a multitude of phenomena. All the details of our world of ordinary experience must be crushed together into a unity, and, if they will not go easily into the narrow mould which has been provided for them, they must be negated. No matter what differences of value we may be accustomed to hold within our ordinary world, both the things of higher and the things of lower importance must be given up. Whether we are viewing the things of the world from a scientific or from a practical point of view, whether they are objects of perception or objects of desire, it makes no difference—the sentence of philosophical annihilation must be passed upon them all. Thought may think a plurality of objects, but thought itself is always one, and it must return to its own nature, having gained the victory and caused plurality to disappear. Cf. *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, ii. 25: 'As unreal forms of being and as one will he be thought, but he who thinks is always one, therefore unity retains the victory.'

Another way of putting the matter is to say that all change and all difference is simply a matter of *names*. We apply names to imaginary objects and thus provide a basis of individuality for particular things, and are encouraged in the attribution to them of a reality to which they have no claim. This point of view anticipates to a certain extent the procedure of the mediaeval nominalists; only that in the case of the nominalists the names gave a fictitious reality to general notions, whereas in the case of the Upanishad writers it is individual things for which they perform this service—or disservice.

This inversion of ordinary experience and contempt for the immediate data of consciousness suggest a parallel also with Descartes in his resolute rejection of all received knowledge until he arrived at his fundamental formula, 'Cogito, ergo sum.' There is, however, an important difference to be noted. The motive of Descartes was to find a secure basis for science and philosophy, on which he could construct a trustworthy system of knowledge in regard to the world of experience. The motives of the Upanishad writers, on the other hand, did not reach to this positive construction. They stopped short with the negative movement, and, having reduced all things to a unity, cared little for any methods by which this unity might be shown to realize itself again in difference. There seemed for them to be no possibility of a return, at least in a logical manner, however much they might afterwards soften the contrast between their speculative position and their practical experience by the use of mythological makeshifts.

This immediately introduces a consideration of the exact nature of the distinction which they drew between phenomenon and noumenon. It is obvious that no reality was attributed to phenomena in their separate particularity, but the question remains whether the phenomena still retained any vestige of reality after their intrinsic connection with the ultimate unity had been perceived or whether an uncompromising judgment of illusion was pronounced. A fuller treatment of this question will be undertaken later when the adequacy of Śaṅkara's interpretation of the Upanishad position is discussed. In the meantime it may be sufficient to indicate that the main tendency is in the direction of thorough-going negation. Some of the metaphors and illustrations used seem, indeed, when fully analysed,

to allow a subsidiary reality to phenomena; e.g., when it is said that from one piece of clay all things may be known, this does not imply the destruction of the reality of the clay when distributed amongst particular things. Again, the metaphor of rivers flowing into the sea, losing their name and form, is an exceedingly common one, but does not necessarily imply the destruction of the reality of the water originally composing the separate rivers. Still, it can hardly be argued that this full analysis of their metaphors was made by those who used them in the Upanishad treatises, and it must be admitted that the main purpose of the metaphors was to show the absolute unreality of all plurality.

The method is very similar to that attributed by Caird to Plotinus: 'The usual attitude of the soul is essentially perverted. In ordinary circumstances, we take shadows for realities and realities for shadows —the beginning of wisdom for us, therefore, is to renounce all that from this false point of view we seem to know.' We are asked to undertake a process of relentless abstraction from the so-called reality of everything finite and from all our theoretical and practical interests in finite things. In the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* the practical aspect is emphasized: 'All the desires of him who has given up his desires and knows his true Self cease even here' (iii. 2. 3). That, theoretically, the differences which mark off one thing from another are illusory and that truth or reality is to be found only in the spiritual unity which pervades them is asserted uncompromisingly in both the *Kaṭha* and *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* Upanishads. In the *Kaṭha Upanishad* (ii. 4. 11) we read: 'He goes from death to death who sees difference anywhere.' The ordinary world of names, forms and works, is denied with equal explicitness in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*: 'In

thought should it be heeded, there is not plurality anywhere. By death is he bound fast to death who here contemplates plurality' (iv. 3. 19), and again, in (iv. 5. 12) we find the following: 'The Self is that into which all things pass away, as the ocean is the one thing into which all rivers flow.' The argument that all difference is a mere matter of names reappears in the sixth book of the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* in a form which calls to mind Parmenides. Τῶ πάντ ὄνομα ἐστίν, ὅσσα βροτοὶ κατέθεντο πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ, γίνεσθαι το και ὄλλυσθαι.

Śaṅkara, in his *Commentary* on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, continues the negative tendency in the warning he gives against transferring subjective qualities to the object. He is not in the habit of using subject and object in the ordinary logical sense. By subjective he means what is real and true, in contrast to what is illusory, so that his warning means that we must not regard as real what is itself illusory, i.e. in order to reach a truly philosophical position we must negate the whole external world.

We must strip off one by one the coverings with which our senses have invested particular things, and we shall find that there is nothing worthy of being called reality beneath these coverings. The particularity is mere nothingness. We shall therefore not be hindered by these outward guises in our search for the pure, undifferenced unity. We become lords of the world and of time in finding that there is no world and no time.

The second object of the movement of thought which is here under consideration is to realize the oneness of the individual soul with the Universal Soul, the Ātman with Brahman. In discovering our own fundamental nature or Self we also discover the ultimate being of the universe. Cf. *Chhān-*

dogya Upanishad, iii. 15. 7: 'The light which shines above this heaven, higher than all, higher than everything, beyond which there are no other worlds, that is the same light which is within man.' To find out this identity is the object of all our searching, and it is from failure to reach it that all our troubles, both theoretical and practical, come. Brahman is all that is, everything else is illusory, and yet we attribute reality to the finite objects of perception and the limited impulses of our souls. But we cannot find deliverance by attending to any external interest; we must recover the inner essence of our souls, and find that our own souls and the world spirit are identical. We are like a bird tied with a string. We are continually trying to escape from the string, whereas we should find our peace if we would but return in quietness to the centre where the string is attached.

The fundamental teaching of the Upanishads on this point is perhaps contained in these two verses: 'In one half verse I shall tell you what has been taught in thousands of volumes. Brahman is true and the world is false; the soul is Brahman and nothing else'; and again, 'There is nothing worth gaining, nothing worth enjoying, there is nothing worth knowing but Brahman alone; for he who knows Brahman is Brahman.' Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan, in his *Hindu Theism* (p. 17), thus describes the aim of Upanishad thought: 'To think and feel and act as if—as is really the case—I were the universe—this is the grand ideal which the Upanishads and the *Gītā* set up before their followers—an ideal which guides the practical conduct and devotional exercises of all true Hindu theists.'

The fundamental formula is *tat tvam asi*, 'That

[1] Cf. *Chhāndogya*, vi. 8. 2.

art thou'—a formula which has been variously interpreted, but which may be taken as expressing simply the equation of the individual self with the universe and of the universe with the Self in the highest sense, the result being a pure undifferenced unity, beyond which there is nothing and which can itself be described only by negative predicates. Everything that hinders an equation, or rather an identification, is to be relentlessly deleted. The doctrine in which such teaching is conveyed is called *advaita-vada*, the doctrine of non-duality, described by Macdonell as an idealistic monism.[1] All is one and the One is myself. Another formula sometimes used is *aham brahma asmi:* 'I am Brahman.' One of the texts which gives the greatest amount of support to this doctrine of identity is *Chhāndogya* i. 14. 4: 'He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks, who is never surprised, he, myself within the heart, is that Brahman.'[2] The passage from the *Chhāndogya* has been described as 'perhaps the oldest in which explicitly the great ground idea of the Vedānta is expressed—the identity of the Brahman and Àtman, God and the soul. The soul which from the empirical point of view is only a drop in the ocean, a spark of the great world-fire, is, in reality, not this. It is not a part, nor an outflow from the divine being, but fully and wholly the divine being which appears infinitely small within us and infinitely great outside of us, but in both cases is one and the same.'

We shall see later on that, though a less satisfactory kind of identification between the individual

[1] Cf. *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 401.

[2] Cf. also *Bṛihad.* i. 4. 15: 'Let a man worship the Self as his only true state.'

self and the universal Self is regarded as possible even on lower or materialistic levels, yet the identification which is ultimately hoped for is considered possible only by an extreme spiritualizing of both the individual self and the universal Self. It is no absorption of our souls in the dead matter of an unspiritual universe that is looked for as the goal. The ultimate principle is regarded as spiritual. The name *Brahman*, according to some interpretations, originally meant ' prayer.' Then, by emphasis upon the idea that human prayer is more potent than the gods, the word came to be used for the eternal principle itself. It would be a mistake to build too much upon such an etymology, but it may serve to indicate a vague appreciation of kinship of nature between the ultimate Being and humanity.

The line of thought by which the identification has been reached has sometimes been mistakenly compared to the Greek *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*. If this maxim indeed were carefully interpreted in its metaphysical aspect, especially as very frequently understood by the Stoics, the danger of mistake would not be so great. But if the phrase is taken to mean merely a psychological analysis of the individual self, then its application here involves a complete misunderstanding of the fundamental point of view of the Upanishads. The point to be emphasized is that there is from the first an essential connection between the individual self and the universal Self. In other words, it is impossible to reach the true individual self without thereby at one and the same moment reaching the universal Self, for, *as soon* as the individual self is reached, it is discovered to be identical with the universal Self. The two conceptions, Brahman and Ātman, are to be regarded as complementary and recipro-

cally interpreting. The relation between them, as conceived by Śaṅkara, is that 'Brahman denotes the term to be defined (*viś eshyam*) and Ātman that which defines it (*viś eshaṇan*), that by Brahman the limitation implied in Ātman is removed, and by Ātman the conception of Brahman as a divinity to be worshipped is condemned.'[1] The standpoint might also be described by saying that a knowledge of the Ātman is the ultimate object of philosophical speculation; but when that which is thus attained is constrained to do cosmological service, it is called Brahman, the caution being always observed that Brahman is never to be viewed as out of connection with Ātman, never even to be treated so externally in regard to the Ātman as to make the relation between them that of worshipped and worshipper.

The relentless search after unity is not satisfied without the 'merging of all forces in one universal spiritual being—the only real entity.' Any adequate characterization of this ultimate Being is impossible. We can describe him only by negations or by the clash of opposite predicates. It is sometimes said that the characterization hovers between the impersonal and the personal, that the ultimate Being is called Brahmăn (neuter) when regarded as unmanifested and impersonal, and Brahmān (masc.) when regarded as a personal creator. This distinction, however, represents more definite thought than would commonly be regarded as permissible in connection with the Ultimate, and corresponds rather to a distinction between the Ultimate and a first manifestation than to any possible characterization of the Ultimate itself. In any case the conception of 'personal creator' must be left behind. In the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* (iii. 18) we are told that 'when one's heart is

[1] Cf. Deussen, *Upanishads*, p. 86.

purified by pure knowledge, he perceives that indivisible one by meditation'; but the knowledge which remains to us is not such as will enable us to apply predicates.

We have already mentioned Śaṅkara's warning against attributing subjective qualities to the object. We may here consider another warning which may be combined with the foregoing. If it is disastrous to ascribe subjective qualities to the object, it is equally disastrous to ascribe objective qualities to the subject, i.e. we must not imagine that the Self can ever be made an object and considered in the same way as other objects. This warning is a continuation of the teaching of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (iii. 4. 2): 'Thou couldst not see the [true] seer of sight, thou couldst not hear the [true] hearer of hearing nor perceive the perceiver of perception, nor know the knower of knowledge. This is thy Self, who is within all'; and again in ii. 8. 11: 'That Brahman sees but is unseen, he hears but is unheard, he perceives but is unperceived.'

The truth is that this Brahman, who is also the Ātman, is too near us for characterization. We cannot stand apart from him and view him as an object so as properly to describe him. We cannot know him as other objects are known. He is certainly beyond the grasp of our understanding, though he may not be altogether beyond the reach of certain powers of our soul. In a sense we are blinded by excess of light.

If we would impose any predicates on the ultimate Being we must remember that this is only a temporary expedient. They are like the alloy which the goldsmith mixes with the pure gold in order that he may work upon it, but which must be subtracted from the ultimate value. So we must

abandon our finite predicates if we would reach pure Being.

The very confusions and contradictions of our finite predicates should open our eyes to their ultimate inadequacy, and the authors of the Upanishads seem to have adopted this method of bringing home to us our mistake. Over and over again, pairs of contradictory predicates are applied, evidently with the intention that they may cancel each other and so set us free for the employment of higher categories or drive us beyond the use of categories altogether. One of the typical passages in this connection is *Bṛihāraṇyaka* (iii. 8. 7): 'Truly, O friend, this imperishable is neither coarse nor fine, neither short nor long, neither red (like fire) nor fluid (like water). It is without shadow, without darkness, without ether, without attachment—having no within and no without.' Spatial and quantitative contrasts are amongst the most popular. Cf. *Chhāndogya*, iii. 4. 5: ''Tis my soul in my heart, smaller than rice corn or barley corn or mustard seed. This is my soul, greater than the earth, greater than the heavens, greater than the worlds.' Cf. also viii. 15: 'There is a little room within the heart which is as great as the ether of space'; and *Kaṭha*, i. 1. 20: 'Of the small he is the smallest, and of the great the greatest'; and ii. 4. 12: 'The person of the size of the thumb.' In the *Taittirīya* also we have the massing together of pairs of opposite predicates (cf. 11. 6); and in *Kaṭha*, iv. 10. 11, the description lays emphasis upon de-localization: 'What is here is also there, and what is there is also here.' Perhaps the greatest effort to transcend space ideas is shadowed forth in *Chhāndogya*, vii. 25: 'The Infinite is under and above, in West and East, in South and North; it is the whole world. Then it follows that the "I" may say "I am under and

above, in West and East, in North and South; I am the whole world."'

So the confusion goes on—the impossible attempt, as most philosophers would put it, to characterize the characterless. We are forced to the conclusion that our ordinary predicates are useless, and that before Brahman words and thinking fail. Max Müller puts the matter rightly when he says, 'Of the Self behind the veil we can know nothing, beyond that it *is*—and this too in a way different from all other knowledge.'[1]

Nevertheless, a triad of predicates—*sat*, *chit*, *ânanda*—is sometimes applied to the ultimate Being, and this fact might be thought to be a defence against the charge of empty abstraction. This formula, however, appears only in the latest Upanishads. At the same time it sums up in convenient form the traces of positive characterization which may be found scattered through the Upanishads, and we may see it in process at least of becoming a formula. It may, therefore, be profitable to examine it for a little.

In choosing the predicate of *being* and using the neuter form of the word Brahmăn, one might be supposed to be committed to the least possible amount of assertion. The neuter is neither male nor female. It seems to imply a vague expansive power, higher than either masculine or feminine, capable of becoming everything, but as yet nothing —the centre of primal life, from which all things issue forth. But yet, though this predicate gives us little of a positive character, we expect that it will at least be trustworthy, and that, when we have said that a thing has being, we shall be allowed to rest in this assertion. But we are hurried on and are not left in secure possession of even this flimsy

[1] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 69.

label. As soon as we have said that Brahman is being, we find that we may equally well use the predicate of 'not-being,' or, at least, the Upanishads would leave us entirely uncertain as to whether we should use the predicate of being or non-being. In the *Chhāndogya* (vi. 2. 2) we read: 'Only that which is, was in the beginning, one only, without a second.' In *Taittirīya*, ii. 7, we seem to get exactly the opposite statement: 'In the beginning non-being indeed was this.' Do these opposite statements imply confusion of thought, or is either of them to be taken in its apparent meaning? It would probably be better to say that they represent inadequacy of thought rather than confusion. The opposite predicates, Being and non-Being, are an attempt to express the inexpressible. It is no new problem with which they deal. We find traces of the same difficulty in *Rig-Veda*, x. 129. 1: 'In the beginning there was neither being nor non-being,' and the contradiction here indicated pervades the whole of subsequent Indian thought. It is really a confession that thought has failed to deal with its subject, and that we should take refuge in poetry and myth. The philosopher, however, cannot so easily give up his task, even though, for want of adequate forms of expression, he continually lays himself open to the charge of contradiction.

The underlying feeling seems to be that, as soon as we have used the predicate Being, we must enter a double caution. We must not think for a moment that the ultimate Being is being in the empirical sense. He is certainly not Being in this sense. Positively and obversely, he is non-Being from the empirical point of view. He is the original and unmanifest who has *not* yet assumed name and form. At the same time, from the transcendental point of view, he is positively Being: it would be

a mistake to regard him as a negation. Or we might put the matter another way, and say that the distinction between Being and non-Being is really an empirical one, and Brahman transcends the distinction. In the words of the *Muṇḍaka* Upanishad, 'He is higher than that which is and that which is not' (ii. 2, 1). The *Vedānta Sūtras* (1. 4. 15) give probably the right interpretation in saying, 'On account of the connection with passages treating of Brahman, the passages speaking of the non-Being do not intimate absolute non-existence.' The very Upanishad—the *Taittirīya*—in which non-existence is most explicitly asserted contains also the statement, 'He who knows the Brahman as non-existing becomes himself non-existing,' and this loss of the transcendental reality which properly belongs to the soul is not looked upon as a calamity. Śaṅkara's *Commentary* is here correct: 'While the term Being ordinarily denotes that which is differentiated by names and forms, the term non-Being denotes the same substance previous to its differentiation.'[1] At the same time this non-Being is in the highest sense also Being. Hunt, in his *Essay on Pantheism*, p. 9, seems to have caught the spirit of the whole attitude: 'He is not only called Being, but, lest that word should fail to express his infinitude, he is also said to be non-Being; not in the sense that matter is said not to exist, not because he is less than Being, but because he is greater than all Being. Our thoughts of existence are too mean to be applied to him.'

Thus, out of the predicate of *being* we get little except a confession of the failure of thought. Are we helped any further forward by the predicate 'thought' (*hit*)? At the most it can be taken only as expressing the belief that Brahman is nothing

[1] *Commentary*, i. 4. 15.

lower than thought, but the thought or knowledge which is ascribed to him cannot be regarded as similar to any thought with which we are familiar in our own experience. As we have seen, he is the negation of all ordinary thought. The ascription of intelligence cannot mean that Brahman is the subject of cognition. This would mean that he is liable to modification, a supposition inconsistent with absolute truth and infinity. Cognition would at least imply the duality of subject and object. In the *Mandukya Upanishad* it is said that 'Brahman is neither internally nor externally cognitive, neither conscious nor unconscious' (v. 7). What does this familiar device of applying opposing predicates suggest in this connection? It seems to remind us again of the twofold caution just referred to. In saying that Brahman is not conscious we mean that we cannot apply to him the duality involved in ordinary thought; in saying that he is not unconscious we assert that he is at least not lower than thought. The term 'self-luminousness' has been used to describe this pure and abstract thought, but it is difficult to assign any content to this somewhat vague phrase.

The predicate 'bliss' is also almost entirely negative. It has been described as 'bliss without the fruition of happiness.' It is not active enjoyment or consciousness of the perfect, unimpeded exercise of capacity. It is rather the complete consciousness of deliverance from anything that is not-bliss, and especially from the miseries attendant on our connection with the empirical world. For the worshipper who would reach Brahman it is the state of dreamless sleep, the negation of anything we would describe as happiness in the ordinary sense. It is the subjective state which results after we have put off the last sheath which

separates us from ultimate Being, and, as applied to the ultimate Being himself, it connotes absolute self-absorption, the soporific sinking into reality, without disturbance from any particular thought or particular interest.

We seem, therefore, driven to the conclusion that the only way in which we can describe the ultimate Reality is by means of negative predicates. The proper attitude to this reality is probably best described by another oft-recurring formula in the Upanishads: *Neti, neti* (It is not so, it is not so). This negative, however, is not to be applied to Brahman himself. As the *Vedānta Sūtras* have it: 'The clause, 'not so, not so,' denies of Brahman the suchness which forms the topic of discussion.[1] The Vedantists and the followers of Upanishad thought generally would vehemently protest against the accusation that their ultimate reality is wholly negative. They would assert that they have reached entity and not non-entity.

And yet they will find it difficult to answer satisfactorily the challenge that they must either give more positive meaning to the predicates of their ultimate Being or acquiesce in the charge of negation. It would seem, indeed, as if thought must overleap itself when it reaches the pitch of abstraction which has just been indicated. In attempting to reach an absolute reality which is set in exclusive opposition to ordinary experience, we find that we reach what is little better than nothing. As Mr. L. P. Jacks says: 'In the whole realm of thought, there is no partition so thin as that which divides God from nothing, and such is the eagerness of the soul, in its flight Godwards, that it constantly breaks through and plunges into the abyss on the other side. When once philosophy has reached the point

[1] *Ved. Sūtras*, iii. 2. 22.

of conceiving God as the only True, the only Real, the moment has come for thought to return upon itself. Not a step further can be taken, and the warning to turn back is peremptory. If thought neglects this warning and tries to refine once more its last refinement . . . it passes the boundary line between thought and nothing, and enters the realm from which there is no return.'

We are almost inclined to think that the thought of the Upanishads has neglected this warning. It has leapt from the knowable to the unknowable and reached the realm of blank darkness and silence. The reality which it professes to reach is altogether unrelated to anything that we know by way of ordinary experience, and so we can hardly say whether it is reality or unreality, whether it is something or everything or nothing.

The danger hinted at should be remembered in view of our main question as to the effect of this philosophy upon our sense of the value of life. Blank darkness is not cheerful, and reaction follows upon excessive straining of thought. There is need sometimes of the warning of Goethe, that ' man is not born to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out where the problem begins, and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible.' [2]

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, January 1908.
[2] *Conversations with Eckermann*, vol. i. p. 272.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORLD WHICH IS DENIED AND THE PROCESS OF DENIAL

Śaṅkara says, in his *Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras* (iii. 2. 22) that 'Whenever we deny something unreal we do so with reference to something real.' There must be a positive conception from which we exclude the negative. But, similarly, we may say that, before the negative can be excluded, we must form some conception of it. It must acquire sufficient body in our consciousness to become the subject of denial. In the early part of this chapter we shall analyse a little further the conception of the world of ordinary experience which is implied in our denial of its particularity. What is this world which we deny, and how did it come to be? In a subsequent chapter we shall discuss the validity of the explanations here suggested, the extent of its acceptance, and the modifications of it which enter into the main currents of the Vedānta philosophy.

In the meantime it may be sufficient to state that the theory of the world denied which is logically implied in the demand for its denial is simply an assertion of the illusory character of that world. What has to be denied must be capable of denial. The existence of the world cannot, therefore, be held to be due to any positively causative principle, but to ignorance, i.e. to something which has already

within it the germs of negation. It is, of course, but natural that such a theory of the genesis of the world should meet with strenuous opposition; but we are not concerned at this stage either with defence or attack, but simply with an analysis of the doctrine as logically complementary to the position taken up in the last chapter.

It is in the later Upanishads that we find the most definite presentation of the doctrine of the illusory character of the finite world. In the *Śvetāśvatara* (i. 10) we read: 'The one God regulates nature and the Self. By meditating on Him the world illusion is completely removed.' The whole Upanishad teaches that God is to be reached by penetration and destruction of the illusion. We should compare also the teaching of the *Maṇḍukya Upanishad*, especially iii. 48: 'No soul ever originates. There is no origination in the whole world. This is the highest saving knowledge, that there is nowhere any becoming.' The same Upanishad teaches in the following books that the world is merely an imagination or construction of the mind.

The position taken up is pretty much that of the Eleatics, who dealt with the difficulties of becoming by denying becoming altogether. If the plurality cannot be reconciled with the unity, the simplest and most effective method is to deny the reality of the plurality. The attack may be led at various points. We may, as Zeno did, show the contradiction involved in all attempts to exhibit the process of becoming, or we may attack the logical doctrine of ground and consequence, and point out that the consequence is the illegitimate drawing out into unreality of what ought to have remained in the eternal and motionless reality of the ground.

We reach the best understanding of the Upanishad position by a consideration of the terms *vidyā*

and *avidyā* (knowledge and ignorance). It is to be noticed that *avidyā* involves not only what we might call empirical ignorance, but also empirical knowledge, i.e. we have in it not only the negative idea usually associated with the word 'ignorance,' but also the positive idea of false knowledge. In other words, it includes all knowledge which presupposes the reality of the objects of ordinary human experience, all knowledge which acquiesces in plurality.

Another set of terms—*para* and *apara*—is used to express pretty much the same distinction. *Para* refers to higher knowledge, and *apara* to lower. The latter pair of terms, however, may refer rather to the body of knowledge as attained or held, and perhaps also as formulated, in opposing systems, whereas the distinction between *vidyā* and *avidyā* may refer rather to the mental activities together with their products. But the root of the distinction is the same, whichever pair of terms is used.

It is of the utmost importance to notice here the secondary meaning which is attached to the word Nescience (or Ignorance). It is used not only to mark our subjective ignorance, but is elevated to the rank of a metaphysical principle. It is the source, not only of our belief in an external world, but also of the external world in which we believe. There is a world-ignorance as well as an individual ignorance, and this world-ignorance is so far positive that it can produce a phenomenal world. Perhaps we understand the transition better if we remember that ignorance also includes empirical knowledge. Our mind readily passes from the negative conception of the ignorance which confines us to this knowledge to the knowledge itself which is included in the ignorance. But further, this body of empirical so-called knowledge requires an explanation, and the explanation is readily forthcoming in the

doctrine that the same principle which is responsible for the empirical knowledge, is also responsible for the objects which may be embraced within that knowledge. In other words, the explanation in both cases is Ignorance.

Or, perhaps, the course of thinking may be described in a slightly different way. The ignorance is regarded not as particular ignorance, but as universal ignorance, i.e. it is ignorance which attaches to God as well as to men. It is described in the *Śvetāśvatara* (i. 5) as ' the own power of God concealed by its emanations.' But, with the ultimate Reality we cannot separate between thought and existence ; therefore misleading thought is also misleading power of bringing into existence.

Whatever may have been the process by which the term *avidyā* came to acquire this double meaning, we must accept the fact of acquisition—that ignorance has both ' the power of obstruction by which it hides from our view the real nature of things and the power of development by which it gives to airy nothing a habitation and a name.' [1] The selection of this name ' ignorance ' is significant of the character of the explanation offered. The very name is an admission of mystery, and at the same time involves a suggestion of an excuse for making no attempt to penetrate the mystery. Ignorance is something which in its own nature cannot be understood. What is non-intelligent in the subjective application of the word corresponds to the non-intelligible in the objective application. As has been said, ' He who would know *avidyā* is like a man who should rush to see darkness by means of a far-shining torch.' Moreover, the use of the term is an excellent mental preparation for the further doctrine of the illusory

[1] Cf. Pundit Kamakhya nath Tarkabagika.

character of the world. If there is a suggestion of negation—or of what should not be—in the producing power, it is much easier to apply the same suggestion to the product. We are ready to emphasize to the greatest possible extent the illusory character of the world of ordinary experience, for we have now found not only that we are mistaken in thinking that there is a world of finite objects, but that this world is itself based upon a principle which is illusion incarnate. Both the Creator—at least in his character of Creator—and the created are, strictly speaking, phenomenal.

This *avidyā* may be called both existent and non-existent [1] on much the same principles as the ultimate is called Being and non-Being, only here Māyā has being only from the empirical point of view, and, from the point of view of absolute reality, has no being. The character of reality is such that, while strictly maintaining this character, it cannot possibly give rise to manifestations of itself. We need not, however, trouble ourselves about the contradiction between the assertions of existence and non-existence as regards *avidyā*, for is not this ignorance itself the realm of contradictions ?

We must not, however, unfairly embarrass the Upanishad writers by first of all ourselves taking too crass and positive a view of matter and then accusing them of trying to explain the positive by the negative, the real by the unreal. We must remember that, according to their theory at least, it is only the negative which is being explained by the negative, the unreal by the unreal. The illustration of a conjurer or magician may help us to understand the situation. In watching the tricks of a conjurer, we, if we think the results real, are labouring under a mistake; but to this mistake of ours corresponds

[1] Cf. the *Vedānta Sāra*, sect. iii.

the power of the conjurer to bring about the results, which power he does not really possess, but which we attribute to him. This illustration, however, covers over more difficulties than it solves. We feel inclined to point out that the conjurer does after all produce an actual result, and it is only our interpretation of it which is unreal. Further, his power is not an illusory or unreal power. It is rather a real power of producing illusion. Even an illusion must have a cause, and the illusion of a finite world is not exempt from this law. From nothing, nothing can come—not even an illusion.

We thus see that the doctrine of *avidyā* is accompanied by many difficulties. If it is nothing, it can produce nothing—not even an illusion, and, if it is something, that which it produces cannot be altogether nothing. We may mistake the rope for the snake, but after all the rope must first of all be there, as the fact of a rope at least, before we can mistake it for a snake. This point will be further referred to in the next chapter.

We may notice, in passing, another allied difficulty which raises what might be called the problem of the morality of the metaphysical process. If Nescience is looked upon as in close association with Brahman, and if Brahman is regarded as producing Nescience, it is difficult to avoid bringing the charge of deliberate deception. The more closely Nescience approaches the rank of a metaphysical principle, the more heavily does this charge press. If, however, Nescience is viewed in close connection with human ignorance, it may be regarded simply as an illusion which has, *somehow or other*, arisen and which may be got rid of if the proper methods are used. The latter point of view is the favourite one.

Having indicated generally the view of the world

of ordinary experience which justified its denial and reinforced the appeal to seek for unity in the one and only reality of Brahman, we may now consider some of the methods by which we are to reach this unity. How may we rise from lower to higher knowledge, from *apara* to *para*, from *avidyā* to *vidyā*? What are the conditions and stages of identification with the one and only Reality? In the *Kaṭha Upanishad* (i. 5. 14) it is said that 'the path to the Self is hard, like the sharp edge of a razor'—a metaphor which would lead us to expect that the conditions would be somewhat onerous. These conditions may be divided into conditions which are to a great extent beyond our control and depend on external circumstances, and on the other hand those which are more fully under our control and for the fulfilment of which we ourselves may be held responsible.

Amongst the external conditions the most prominent are membership of the proper class, group, or even sex. Sudras are excluded, and terrible penalties are assigned for those who presume to teach the Vedas to this class, and for those members of the class who may, even accidentally, hear the sacred Scriptures. Women also seem to be excluded. In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, Yājñavalkya, after discussion with his wife on the topic of immortality, goes away into the forest alone, she not being deemed worthy to accompany him. The notion of secrecy seems to be inherent in the very meaning of the word Upanishad, and the treatises themselves are looked upon as containing a body of esoteric doctrine which is to be communicated only to a few. As Pythagoras is said to have done, the Upanishad writers 'spoke wisdom only among the perfect.' There is no idea that, if a doctrine is true, it ought therefore to be communicated to all and sundry.

Sometimes even the teacher would appear to have a monopoly in certain doctrines. Cf. *Aitareya*, iii. 5. 9. 'Let no one tell these *saṁhitās* to one who is not a resident pupil, who has not been with his teacher at least one year'; and again, *Maitrāyaṇa*, vi. 29: 'Let no one preach this most sacred doctrine to one who is not his son or his pupil.' We might compare also *Chhāndogya*, iii. 11. 1: 'A father may therefore tell that doctrine of Brahman to his eldest son, or to a worthy pupil, but no one should tell it to any one else, even if he gave him the whole sea-girt earth full of treasure.'

In any case, the instruction of a teacher is regarded as extremely necessary. There is little independent searching after truth. Cf. *Kaṭha Upanishad*, i. 2. 9: 'That doctrine is not to be obtained by argument, but when it is *declared by another* then it is easy to understand.' What might be called the dramatic setting of an Upanishad consists in the wandering of a pupil from one teacher to another until he finds the sage who will reveal to him the true Self, dispersing the empirical knowledge which binds him to a mere semblance of reality. Cf. *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, vii. 25: 'One who does not attend on a tutor does not believe'; and in another passage we get the exhortation, 'Awake, seek competent instruction, and try to know God.'

There seems to be a certain amount of development in the degree of importance which was attached to putting oneself under a tutor. In the earlier period the demand was not so insistent as it became in later times, and the change is probably due to growing Brahmanic influence. When once the tutor is chosen, the devotion to him must be exclusive. In *Maitrāyana*, vi. 29, we find the requirement that the pupil must be 'devoted to no other teacher.' In such a devotion we get, in fact, the

germ of the idea which was to become more common in later Indian thought. The abstract religious ideal which the pupil seeks to reach by the help of the teacher is somewhat too elevated and lacking in content to be continuously attractive. The devotion which ought to be directed towards the idea is therefore transferred to the teacher, or rather the devotion towards the ideal is perhaps stimulated primarily by the teacher himself. The teacher thus comes to be regarded as more than a merely human person : he is a sage, or *rishi*, and well advanced on the way towards deification. Cf. *Śvetāśvatara*, vi. 23, where we are told that the right-minded pupil 'feels the highest devotion for God, and for his *guru* as for God.'

Then the period of subjection to a teacher is by no means a short one. It is said that Indra Maghavat was obliged to live with Prajāpati for 101 years, during which, through three distinct periods of thirty-two years and one of five, he was led from lower to higher stages of philosophical speculation. And this mythological exaggeration must at least indicate the actuality of a fairly lengthy period, which actuality is further proved by examples too numerous to mention.[1] The training was to be taken seriously and even as a life vocation. The pupil held firmly to the idea of himself becoming a teacher, and handing on the instruction which he had himself received. Another allied circumstance which increases the reverence for a teacher is the belief in a kind of apostolical succession. The teacher who is invested with authority derives that authority very largely from the fact that he has entered into a worthy line of inspired teachers and can trace his spiritual inheritance back to some original *guru* who learnt the science of ultimate being from God

[1] Cf. the above quotation from *Aitareya*, iii. 5. 9.

Himself. Cf. *Muṇḍaka*, i. 1. 1: 'Brahmā was the first of the devas, the maker of the universe, the preserver of the world. He told the Knowledge of Brahman, the foundation of all knowledge, to his eldest son Atharvan. Whatever Brahmā told Atharvan, that knowledge of Brahman Atharvan formerly told to Angir; he told it to Satyavāha Bharadvāga, and Bharadvāga told it in succession to Angiras the teacher of Saunaha, the great householder.' Cf. also *Chhāndogya*, viii. 15: 'Brahmā told this to Prajāpati, and Prajāpati to Manu his son, and Manu to mankind.'

In regard to the value of the Vedas as helps towards the attainment of ultimate enlightenment, the Upanishads are by no means agreed. The general position seems to be that the Vedas by themselves are insufficient for enlightenment. A somewhat subordinate place is given to them in *Chhāndogya*, viii. 15. It would seem as if they were to be studied in odd moments which were left over from other tasks. Cf. 'He who has learnt the Veda from a family of teachers according to the sacred rule, in *the leisure time* left from the duties to be performed for the *guru*.' This subordination perhaps reflects the point of view taken up by Upanishad writers representing the opinion of a school claiming a certain amount of independence of the Brahmans. The Vedas were only a means to an end, and when the end was reached the means might be discarded. It is a position very similar to that which is afterwards found in the *Panchadaśī* (iv. 45. 46), where it is laid down that, as soon as a knowledge of the truth is obtained, the sacred writings themselves, as portions of the unreal dualism, are to be abandoned, 'just as a torch is extinguished when one has no further use for it, or a husk is thrown away by one who merely wants the grain.' Nevertheless, in the period of the

later Upanishads, when the influence of the Brahmans has increased, the study of the Vedas acquires much greater importance, and the position taken up with regard to them becomes very much like that of the mediaeval scholastics with regard to the ultimate sources of ecclesiastical dogma. If, however, we wish to gather an idea of the general Upanishad view, we find the spirit very faithfully reflected long afterwards by Śaṅkara: 'Scriptural texts are not the only means of knowledge; . . . but scriptural texts on the one hand and intuition on the other are to be had recourse to according to occasion.' [1]

It might be interesting at this stage to follow out a line of thought by which these two sources of knowledge just referred to may be shown to be one and the same. Just as attempts were made to regard the mediaeval ecclesiastical authority not merely as bare authority, but as in accordance with reason, so the very words of the Veda are shown to be, not mere words, but constituent elements in reality. It is a near approach to certain aspects of the *Logos* doctrine, and it is developed very fully by Mādhavāchārya. The *sphoṭa* stands for an eternal meaning, or eternal word of God. General ideas are indicated, and these are eternal in the Platonic sense and constitutive of reality. As Mādhava says, 'All words as expressing definite meanings ultimately rest on that one *summum genus* —pure existence, it being free from all coming into being or ceasing to be. . . . This existence is called the "great soul." The real fact is that all words ultimately mean the supreme Brahman.' According to this view the acceptance of the words of the Vedas in all their authoritativeness would bring us into contact with the reality which they ultimately

[1] *Commentary* i. 1. 1; cf. supra, p. 95.

mean. Knowledge of the Veda thus becomes equivalent to intuitive knowledge of the Ultimate. The Veda ceases to be a merely external authority. It is not even merely a means by which the end may be reached, but it is a constitutive part of the end itself. Authority and intuition merge into one another.

This argument leads our thoughts naturally to the highest of the conditions which have been described as not entirely under our control. We may take up a passive attitude also in regard to the Self—the true and universal Self—of which we are in search. Sometimes it would seem as if we, as individuals, had to wait for a kind of election on the part of the Self. We not only choose to search for it, but it chooses us. The finding of the self is of grace on the part of the highest Self, and not of works or of effort on our part. All ordinary means are to be laid aside, all ordinary methods of learning, and even the critical investigation of revelation. The position is indicated in the *Kaṭha Upanishad*, i. 2. 24: 'This Self is not attainable by teaching the Vedas, nor by understanding, nor by great learning. It is *attainable by him alone whom it chooses*.' The same attitude is shown in *Śvetāśvatara*, ii. 20, where knowledge is said to be by 'grace of the Creator.' In the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* (iii. 2. 3) we have practically identical language with that already quoted from the *Kaṭha*.

It should be noticed, however, that Gough gives a somewhat different translation of the words italicized in the quotation from the *Kaṭha Upanishad*. He translates thus: 'If he chooses the Self, it is attainable by him.' A more active attitude is thus indicated. The translation first given has the authority of Deussen, Max Müller, and Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan, and seems to be more in

accordance with the general spirit of the passage. We should not, however, invest the idea here indicated with the sternness which is latent in the Western doctrine of election, which sternness is largely due to the duality of the Supreme Self and the finite self. In Indian philosophy the duality is always regarded as, in theory at least, transcended, so that any choosing or election on the part of the Supreme becomes ultimately a choice also by the finite self when it realizes its oneness with the Supreme.

It will not, however, be unjustifiable to carry away from the discussions of the last few pages the idea that there are certain conditions of religious attainment which are to a great extent outside our control, some of them even exclusive and of the nature of particular privileges of a particular class.

We may now turn to the more active conditions, or the conditions supplied by the individual soul in its efforts towards union with the Divine. The phrase 'qualified person' is continually made use of, and we have to inquire what is meant by these qualifications and how they are to be attained, so far as they lie in the power of the individual. We must remember, to begin with, that religious attainment is connected with moral requirements. It is only those who are pure in soul who may attain unity with the Divine. The intellectual agreement with the fundamental principles of the philosophy —the discrimination between what is eternal and what is non-eternal—must also be moralized and take shape in 'renunciation of desire to enjoy the fruit both here and hereafter—the acquirement of tranquillity and self-restraint' (*Vedānta Sūtras*, i. 1. 1). According to Rāmānuja there are four pre-requisites: (1) distinction between what is

permanent and what is non-permanent: (2) calmness of mind; (3) renunciation; (4) desire for final release. The commentators fairly represent the attitude of the Upanishads that the proper intellectual preparation is ostensibly a state of moral purification. 'When a man's nature has become purified by the serene light of knowledge, then he sees him, meditating on him as without part.' The ideal student is described in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 4. 23, as one who has become 'quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, collected,' and the same idea is found in *Kaṭha*, ii. 24: 'He who has not first turned away from frivolity, who is restless and uncollected, in whose heart there is not peace, cannot, through searching, reach him.' Such requirements are a logical consequence of the fundamental philosophical position. If the external world is unreal and worthless, then it follows that all desires must be withdrawn from it, and, further, the withdrawal becomes easier when we realize, as the Stoics afterwards put it, that all things that matter are within our own power.

What is emphasized most of all is the putting aside of all desires for reward either in this life or in that which is to come. The worshipper must be sincere and must prove his sincerity by renunciation of all interest in the lower goods of life. The path must be straightforward; cf. *Īśā Upanishad*, 18: 'Keep us free from crooked evil, and we shall offer thee praise'; and, again, *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, i. 5. 28: 'Lead me from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light.' Earnestness is mentioned as a qualification in *Muṇḍaka*, iii. 2. 4, and, time after time, tests, severe and long-continued, are applied to the worshipper to put his sincerity and earnestness to the proof. If he can withstand these tests he is qualified for entering into 'the home of Brahman.'

Purity is, of course, a corollary of sincerity and

earnestness, and peace is the consequence of the absence of warring and confused desires. The general attitude is summed up in *Maitrāyana Upanishad*, vi. 30 : ' Om. In a pure place shall man, being pure himself, abide firmly by the reality, study the real, speak the real, meditate on the real, sacrifice to the real. In this way will he be complete in the real Brahman. His reward is freedom from bonds, and without hope, without fear either from others or from himself, without desiring anything further, he obtains permanent and immeasurable happiness and remains in it. For the freedom from desire is as the highest virtue of the most excellent treasure.'

In connection with the psychological condition of soul necessary for the apprehension of the highest Brahman, and before treating of the more elaborate and technical stages through which the devotee must pass in order to reach the highest life, we may here discuss the general question how far works—and especially ritual and sacrificial works—enter as constituent elements into the highest spiritual life itself. In regard to this question there is great diversity of opinion. Sometimes works are demanded as mere technical preliminaries, as, e.g. in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, iii. 2. 10 : ' Let a man tell the science of Brahman to those who have performed the necessary acts, . . . who themselves offer as an oblation the one Agni, full of faith—by whom the rite of carrying fire on the head has been performed according to the rule.' They are preliminary also to the right attitude to a teacher ; cf. *Chhāndogya*, vii. 21. 1 : ' When one performs all sacred duties, then one attends really on a tutor.' In regard to this latter quotation, however, it is but right to say that it is doubtful whether the ' sacred duties ' here referred to include more than the proper psychological conditions discussed in preceding

paragraphs. Still, there are numerous other passages in which the practice of Yoga and asceticism are enjoined and emphasized, and it seems to be necessary to agree with the general position that ritual works are necessary as preliminaries. Max Müller holds that the Upanishad doctrine is that 'works, though in themselves useless, and even mischievous if performed with a view to any present or future rewards, are necessary as a preparatory discipline.' This, however, does not settle the further question of their ultimate value. We may agree as to their necessity as a preparatory discipline, but can we by means of them reach the highest possible result, and, when this result has been attained, is it necessary for its continuance that works should still be practised?

It is the perennial controversy between formalism and faith. We shall find a hint of it in the *Gītā*; cf. xi. 55: 'Not by Vedas, nor by austerities, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice, can I be seen as thou hast seen me now.' We find it reappearing in later ages in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in the discussions as to the value of penance. Mystics and quietists were inclined to say that austerities do not produce permanent results, but are only exercises of the soul.

There seems to be a distinct tendency, especially in the earlier Upanishads, which are comparatively unaffected by the reaction against Buddhism, to say that sacrificial works lead only to subordinate results. Works have no permanently lasting value—they do not 'cling to a man.' In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, i. 5. 16, works and knowledge are definitely contrasted, and it is said that 'by the labours of the sacrifice is the way of the fathers won,' whereas by knowledge the 'way of the gods is won.' And the way or world of the fathers is regarded as a distinctly lower state worthy

only to be a place of temporary sojourn from which there must be a return to merely mundane existence. Again, it is urged that mere austerity is not sufficient to give the highest knowledge. In *Chhāndogya*, iv. 10, a series of austerities is referred to, and at the end of them the pupil is exhausted, and yet the highest knowledge is not attained Even in the late *Maitrāyana Upanishad*, which on the whole exhibits an opposite tendency, King Bṛihadratha is represented as enduring the most severe and long continued penances, and yet at the end of them confessing, 'I know not the Self' (cf. sect. 1). The same attitude appears many centuries after in Śaṅkara[1]: 'The knowledge of active religious duty has for its fruit transitory felicity, and that again depends on the performance of religious acts. The inquiry into Brahman, on the other hand, has for its fruit eternal bliss, and does not depend on the performance of any acts.' In a later passage also Śaṅkara argues that nothing is required for the knowledge of Brahman save knowledge itself. Prof. Berriedale Keith holds that 'later on in the history of the Vedānta efforts were made to regard works as a necessary propaedeutic; but not only is this never an essential part of the system, but it is not a part at all of the system as it stands in the Upanishads of the time before the Buddha.' Prof. Keith would therefore agree that Śaṅkara had interpreted rightly the Upanishad position, especially in its earlier phase.

Still, in reference to the general position of the Upanishads, it is impossible to regard Śaṅkara's interpretation as the only possible one. There is a strong tendency in the opposite direction, viz. towards regarding sacrificial works as of more permanent value. It would seem at first sight as

[1] *Commentaries*, i. 1. 1.

if this were a more materialistic and unspiritual attitude, and as if the only possible way of adjusting the values of works and of mystical insight were to regard the former method as strictly preliminary to the latter. It is evident, however, that a feeling grew up to the effect that, while this might be admitted to be the ultimate adjustment, it was a mistake for the actual religious life to emphasize too much the superiority of knowledge over works. There is a dangerous possibility that the conditions applicable to the ultimate state may be transferred prematurely to the proximate stages, and that what is proper to a state of adequate enlightenment may be anticipated in a state of inadequate enlightenment. As this latter state is practically a universal one, the danger that works may be discarded before they have fulfilled their function is also a universal one, and thus a general antinomianism may prevail.

It seems to have been a fear of this sort which inspired such passages as we have in the *Īśā Upanishad*, v. 12 : 'All who worship what is not the true cause enter into blind darkness ; those who delight in the true cause enter into still greater darkness.' This may be interpreted by a similar passage in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 4. 10 : 'All who worship what is not knowledge [*avidyā*] enter into blind darkness. Those who delight in knowledge enter, as it were, into greater darkness.' [1] The general meaning of all the passages seems to be that those who are 'immersed in works,' who trust in sacrifice, and are therefore still in a state of ignorance, enter into darkness ; but the darkness is not so dense as in the case of those who depend on knowledge alone and think that, with the acquisition of knowledge, they may be permitted entirely to despise works.

[1] Parallel to *Īśā*, i. 9 ; cf. also Śaṅkara's *Commentary*, iii. 4. 2.

Only a combination of works and knowledge can establish us on the highest level of spiritual attainment, and, if a choice must be made between them, i.e. if *either* works or knowledge is exclusively pursued, the alternative of knowledge alone is more dangerous than the alternative of works alone. Libertinism is more to be feared than legalism. The latter might be compared to a building with good foundations which rises only a short distance above the ground : the former to a lofty and beautiful building, without secure foundations and therefore in danger of utter ruin. Nevertheless, though the extreme of works is less dangerous than the other extreme, it also is to be avoided—it leads to darkness. To the passages already quoted emphasizing the danger of exclusive devotion to works, we may add the almost contemptuous reference in the *Muṇḍaka*, i. 2. 9. 12 : ' Considering sacrifice and good works as the best, these fools know no higher good. . . . Nothing that is eternal can be gained by what is not eternal.'

It is comparatively easy to see how a consistent position on this question might be reached. It is generally agreed that works are necessary as a preparatory discipline, and it would also be regarded as exceedingly dangerous to conclude prematurely that the preparatory stage has been passed. Spiritual development is a continuous process, and it is altogether a mistake to think that one can pass at a leap from the beginning to the end without going through the stage of works. Such an adjustment of the two points of view seems to be indicated by several Indian writers. R. C. Bose, in his *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 9, says : ' There are passages in which the performance of the duties of life, study of the Vedas under an accredited teacher, austerity and penance are represented as indispensable requisites

for the attainment of supreme knowledge, and there are others in which these are spoken of in disparaging terms and the mystic notion of a beatific or tranquil vision is prominently brought forward. . . . In reality there is no contradiction. The utilization of the means is necessary for the attainment of the end, but when the preliminary process has been completed, it should be entirely lost sight of.' Other writers would emphasize more forcibly the condition, '*when the preliminary process has been completed*,' and point out that it is *only* then that the preliminaries can be lost sight of. Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan thus comments on the passage from the *Īśā Upanishad* which we have referred to above: 'The author is evidently an advocate of the harmony of knowledge and of work. There seems to have been from an early age a class of thinkers or devotees who were for giving up duties, both sacrificial and social, as soon as they attained to a knowledge of Brahman. They thought that *vidyā* and *avidyā*, knowledge and not-knowledge (or works), could not be harmonized, that devotion to the Cause, i.e. to Brahman, excluded all devotion to the Not-Cause, that a life of contemplation was not compatible with active life—a life in close contact with the material world. The author of the *Īśā* seems to think that both these aspects are equally necessary for human perfection, and should receive equal attention. By devoting ourselves to practical duties we avoid what the author describes as death, i.e. that merely instinctive and animal life which a man lives before he is awakened to a sense of duty: while by the contemplation and worship of God we rise to that higher spiritual life which the author aptly describes as *amṛitam* (immortality). Following only one of these disciplines to the exclusion of the other is apt to generate blindness, and the

author is scarcely wrong in thinking that the blindness which is produced by exclusive spirituality is a deeper blindness than that which is produced by exclusive ceremonialism.' [1] Pundit Kamakhya nath Tarkabagika, in his lectures on *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 5, takes much the same view: 'It is clear that we must rise to *jñānā-yoga*, not by leaps and bounds, but on the stepping-stones of *karma-yoga*. The practice of *karma-yoga* is a *sine qua non*, inasmuch as it effects the purification of the mind. Hence it need hardly be said that those who pretend to rise at once to the contemplation of the supreme Godhead by leaping over the intermediate stages remain stationary in the interval between two worlds. Those who attempt a cross-grained ascent against the course of nature, and, before being qualified for *jñāna-yoga*, betake themselves to the worship of *Nirguna* Brahman, far from obtaining liberation, are punished with hell for rejecting the way of works . . . "they enter hell who delight in knowledge only."'

It must be admitted that the danger which is indicated in these quotations is not merely imaginary. There has been a tendency amongst those who have been influenced by the Upanishads to lay exclusive emphasis upon the contemplative and mystical side, and to allow the religion of usages to give place altogether to that of ecstatic union. If this tendency arose entirely from a dislike of *mere* ritual, little objection could be taken, but it is to be feared that sometimes the supporters of the mystical position have allowed their dislike of ritual works to spread to all works whatsoever. Their religion has thus lapsed into quietism and sometimes into indifference. The supreme condition of unity with the Divine is undisturbed contempla-

[1] Note on *Īśā Up.*

tion rather than vigorous righteousness of life and reconstructive zeal. The tone of the *Kaṭha Upanishad*, e.g., is predominantly passive, and, generally it is the man who withholds himself from all ordinary activities, whether ceremonial or social, and who gives himself up to the life of quiescent contemplation, who has the best and, according to some, the only chance of attaining that unity with Brahman which is the goal of the soul. 'Cease from works' is an oft-recurring refrain in the Upanishads, and this aspect of Upanishad theory has been frequently emphasized by modern supporters.

Nevertheless, it is but just to say that the contemplation which is demanded has an active aspect in itself. It is something which has to be repeated again and again. Śaṅkara (i. 1. 1.) emphasizes this requirement, and quotes texts from the Upanishads enjoining the *practice* of wisdom.[1] Rāmānuja also, in his *Commentary* on the Sūtras (Thibaut's translation, p. 11), describes meditation as 'steady remembrance.' Contemplation, again, is sometimes contrasted with 'mental inactivity,' or sluggishness of mind. Thus we must remember, that even where contemplation is regarded as almost the sole condition of the supreme religion, the passive character of this contemplation is not to be exclusively emphasized. It carries within itself the germs of activity, even though this activity must be admitted to be of a purely speculative and not of a practical character.

We must now turn to the more detailed accounts of the *stages* by which the proper religious attitude is reached. It is difficult to obtain a consistent account of this subject, as, the further we enter into details, the more has account to be taken of the

[1] Cf. *Bṛihadāranyaka Up.* iv. 2. 21.

differences between the various schools of Upanishad thought, and the more closely do we approach the region where imagination, with its diversifying influence, becomes an ally of thought.

We may first of all consider the doctrine of the four *āśramas*, or stages of life. There is first the stage of the *brahmachārī*, when the Vedas are studied under the guidance of a teacher. Then comes the life of the *grihastha*, or householder, during which the ordinary duties of society are undertaken and sacrifices are performed. After this period is over the devotee betakes himself to the woods, where he spends his time in fasting and in penance in the state of the *vānaprastha*. Last of all there is the stage of the *sannyāsī*, who has no fixed place of abode, who is without possessions, who has no desire for individual existence, and longs only for his release from the round of mundane existence and his absorption into the universal. It is to be noticed that the order of the stages slightly varies; occasionally the *brahmachārī* stage is put first, occasionally third, and occasionally it is regarded as covering all the stages prior to the last. In any case, the knowledge which is obtained in the student period, when this is put first, would be kept *in retentis* and applied when the duties of the householder had been performed. The order is put quite definitely in *Chhāndogya*, viii. 15, but the idea of retention is also emphasized. The pupil, after receiving his discharge from the *guru*, settles in his own house and keeps up the memory of what he has learnt by repeating it regularly in some sacred spot. Further, instruction in the Vedas is not to be taken in any narrow sense, and the idea may well be applied to that long-continued instruction from a teacher which was described above and which can in our minds be more easily connected with a pupil who

either has lived or is living the life of a *vānaprastha*, than with one who has still before him the duties of the householder. Finally, if we widen the idea of education so as to make it include all kinds of preliminary training, we can see the reason for including all kinds of preliminary training under the heading of *brahmachārī*. From the point of view of the highest all the lower stages are preliminary instruction.

When we try to trace the development more subjectively, or as it takes place in the individual soul and represents the spiritual effect of the environment which the worshipper has provided for himself or has had provided for him by others, we come to the doctrine of the three stages (or, in the later Upanishads, four). Through various stages of consciousness we rise to the supreme position. The guiding text for the exposition of this doctrine is in *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, viii. 7. 12, where the conversation between Indra and Prajāpati is recorded, and where Indra is represented as passing from one stage to another by gradual instruction. To each subjective stage there corresponds a more or less inadequate way of viewing cosmic processes. There is (1) the stage of ordinary waking life, when the self is identified with the body and the corresponding world-power is (as interpreted later by Śaṅkara) Vaiśvānara. Prajāpati explains at this stage that the self is 'the person that is seen in the eye.' His hearers understand him to mean by this 'the self who is seen when looking into the eye of another,' i.e. the same self as is seen in water, in a mirror—the detailed picture of the body 'even to the hair and nails.' They go away content with this materialistic answer and live the materialistic life—the life of demons 'who have no faith and

[1] Cf. *Chhānd.* vii. 7. 5.

offer no sacrifices, who deck out the body of the dead with perfume, flowers, and fine raiment by way of ornament and think they will thus conquer that world.' [1]

Indra, however, is not satisfied with this dependence of the self on the materialistic body, and becomes the prototype of those who rise from the waking state to (2) the dreaming state. At the first stage both body and mind are active, but in the dreaming state only the mind is active, in the imaginations of which dreams are made. The cosmical power corresponding to this stage is *Hiraṇyagarbha*. It is important to notice here the reversal of ordinary experience. In ordinary experience, in our attempt to reach reality, we are accustomed to put the waking state above the dream state; but, of course, in the progress towards a state of being which is as far removed as possible from ordinary experience the scale of values must be reversed. It is now ordinary experience which occupies the somewhat despised place which we are *usually* apt to give to dreams.

In what we usually call the dreaming state the self throws off its dependence on the body, and, as described by Prajāpati (*Chhāndogya*, viii. 10), 'moves about happy in dreams, immortal, fearless.' As described in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 3. 9: 'The person or self is self-illuminated. Nevertheless, the soul has not yet got rid of the conditions of individuality. It has to borrow the materials of its dreams from the waking state, and, further, even the distressing experiences of the ordinary actual are repeated in the imaginary world. 'It takes away with it the material from the whole world, destroying (i.e. its original context) and building it up again' (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 3. 9). This reconstructed experience,

[1] Cf. Ibid. vii. 8. 5.

though more under the control of the self, still remains the experience of the individual self. The distinction between the self and other selves and between the self and objects still remains, even though the self lives in a world of his own creation and reaches almost the level of a god in the extensity of his power, creating 'horses, chariots, roads, blessings, happiness, and joys' (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 5. 10).

So we must transcend this stage also and reach (3) the stage of dreamless sleep in which we win absorption in the *prājña* Ātman, or true Self—the 'universal subject of thought.' Cf. *Kaushītaki*, iii. 3, where there is comparison with a dying man and the gradual infolding of his faculties. Another metaphor used (iii. 8) is that of the spokes and the wheel. 'For as in a car the circumference of the wheel is placed upon the spokes and the spokes on the nave, thus are these objects placed on the subjects and the subjects on the *prāṇa*. And that *prāṇa* (breath, the living and breathing power) indeed is the self of *prājña* (the self-conscious self), blessed, imperishable, immortal.' The cosmical parallel is sometimes said to be *Īśvara*, but it is Īśvara in his most indefinite phase when the cosmic Ignorance has hardly begun to operate and there is little distinction from the indescribable Absolute. In the dreamless sleep the self is conscious of being the universe, and all distinctions are merged in an absolute unity; cf. iv. 3. 21: 'This indeed is his true form in which his wishes are fulfilled, in which the Self only is his wish, in which no wish is left—free from any sorrow. Then is a father not a father, a mother not a mother, the worlds not worlds, the gods not gods, the Vedas not Vedas.' All differences are negated.

Yet occasionally, and especially in the later

Upanishads, the position is taken up that even this dreamless sleep is not the highest stage. There are two inadequacies still connected with it. In the first place, it is liable to be broken in upon at any time by the waking world. It is merely a transient experience, and we are in it still at the mercy of external influences. It would be better, therefore, to consider the highest state as dependent, not upon what one might call the accident of deep sleep, but upon such a contemplative state as it may be possible voluntarily to induce (as, e.g., by *yoga* practices) and which nothing can disturb. Perhaps this danger of interruption is vaguely hinted at in *Chhāndogya*, viii. 3. 2, where it is said that men 'go day after day into the Brahman world and yet do not discover it, because they are carried away by untruth.' In the second place, there seems to be the uncomfortable suspicion that the state of deep sleep is purely negative. This is hinted at by Indra even in the *Chhāndogya*, viii. 11. 1. He is not content that the self should be in perfect rest in sleep, immortal, fearless, but urges the objection that in such a state 'he thus does not know himself that he is I, nor does he know anything that exists. He is going to utter annihilation,' and he adds almost petulantly, 'I see no good in this.' The same objection is urged more explicitly in the *Maṇḍukya Upanishad*, where the general teaching is that illusion clings to all the first three stages; cf. ii. 15: 'The dreamer knows wrongly, the sleeper knows nothing. Both are wrong.' A state of being is desired which shall be 'coincident with absolute wakefulness,' and approach to the self-luminousness of Brahman, and in which, also, there shall be absolute union with the Universal Subject. Cf. *Maṇḍukya*, iii. 46: 'If the spirit neither sinks in sleep, nor after distraction seeks, then it appears as Brahman, motionless and

free from appearance.' Such a highest state (*turīya* or *chaturtha*) is of course indescribable, with the indescribableness of Brahman himself. It is indeed naïvely suggested that if we wish to describe it we must borrow the terms of our description from dreamless sleep, which is, of course, equivalent to saying that we cannot describe it at all. We must be content with the spiritual consummation of identity, and must not attempt to put into words what is really beyond all words. (In the later writings sometimes a fifth state is added (*unmanī*), which is described as the 'fourth state arrived at maturity.'[1]

A somewhat more elaborate description of the soul's ascent towards God is given in the doctrine of the five *sheaths* (*kośa*). It does not differ in any essential point from the process we have been considering. Only the metaphors are changed, and they are more analytical. There is the same mingling of psychological and cosmological conceptions.

The first four sheaths are regarded as shells or husks which must be dropped off in order that we may perceive the true Self—the fifth sheath with which alone we may be content. The outer coverings prevent us from seeing the true self in identity with God. The first sheath is the *annamaya*, or sheath of food. At this stage the self is identified with the body and the outlook is wholly material. The body is supported by food, and, cosmically, the world viewed in its static material aspect occupies our whole attention. From this we rise to (2) the *prāṇamaya* sheath, or sheath of breath. It is said in the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, ii. (which is the leading text for this doctrine) that those 'who worship breath as Brahman obtain the full life.' This seems to mean that they are able to conceive of the fullness

[1] Cf. *Jacobs*, p. 61.

of physical life, i.e. the organism is regarded not only in its statical but also in its dynamical aspect. We go beyond matter and include a conception very much akin to the force of the modern physicist. This principle of life fills the external (*annamaya*) sheath and gives it relative reality. It is also to be regarded as the universal life or force of the universe. It breathes through the universe in the air and the ether, and the earth is its support. The point of view is here still wholly physical.

(3) With the third stage, or the *manomaya* sheath, we enter the mental region, but the mind is at first regarded in a passive manner. Psychologically speaking, it is at the sensitive level, dependent on external impressions. Religiously it is dependent on authority. This is probably what is meant, in *Taittirīya*, ii. 3, by saying that its constituent parts are the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas. 'Yajus is its head, Rik is its right arm, Saman is its left arm. The doctrines (Brāhmaṇas) are its trunk, the Atharva hymns its support.' The self is still identified with the individual, though now this is psychically and not merely physically conceived. Ethically we are on the level of the private will, directed to merely private ends.

(4) At the higher level of the *Vijñānamaya kośa* it is recognized that the self composed of particular sensations and particular desires is not sufficient. We must reach the conception of the understanding subject—the Reason which gives unity to all our experience. We must also realize that this understanding is not particular but universal. We identify ourselves with the universal support of all knowledge. 'The great Intellect is the support.' In actual knowledge or truth we reach such communion, but this actual knowledge must be supplemented by faith. Such worship of Brahman as

knowledge is worthy of the gods and it brings great spiritual satisfaction. 'If a man knows understanding as Brahman, he leaves all evil behind in the body and attains all his wishes.' [1]

(5) Nevertheless this is not the highest stage of all. The understanding still involves the duality of subject and object. From the point of view of the individual it means that we still conceive of God as the object of thought: from the point of view of the universal it means that the highest Self still distinguishes itself from its objects. We must reach a point of view at which there is absolute identity, at which subject and object are one. Such a position is reached in the *ānandamaya kośa*—the sheath of bliss, which involves the entire destruction of individuality and the consummation of absorption. Of such a state Brahman is the seat or support. In fact, there is nothing but Brahman, and everything else is merged in him. The state is one of pure joy, described quaintly in the following terms: 'Joy is its head, satisfaction its right arm, great satisfaction is its left arm, bliss is its trunk' (*Taittirīya*, ii. 5). It is unutterable rest and peace, the unending, dreamless sleep which is nevertheless no sleep, but the most intense wakefulness or self-luminousness of the eternal Self.

There are other ways also in which the progress of the soul is described. Sometimes a localized aspect is emphasized and the four stages are thus indicated: (1) being in the same heaven with God, (2) nearness to God, (3) assimilation to likeness of God (where the local character is beginning to disappear), (4) complete union.

We should notice that at every stage a certain amount of religious satisfaction is promised. To the mental state of the worshipper there corresponds

[1] Cf. *Taittiriya*, ii. 5.

an objective aspect or manifestation of the eternal being. Sometimes there is regular parallelism, but sometimes the sense of closeness of connection between the psychical and the cosmical degenerates into confusion between the two spheres, and also between the psychical and the physical. There are traces of such confusion in the gradations of absorption given in *Chhāndogya Upanishad*, vi. 15. 2, where 'speech is merged in his mind, mind in breath, breath in heat (fire), and heat in the highest Being.' In the next chapter of the same Upanishad we find also a list given of various objects arranged according to the degree in which they approach the highest reality, and in this list speech, mind, will, consideration, reflection, understanding, power, food, water, fire, ether, memory, hope, spirit are placed one after the other, in a sort of ascending scale, without any consciousness of incongruity. This mingling of the physical and the spiritual may be due simply to an inadequate understanding of the distinction between the two, or it may be due to the greater or less influence of the general standpoint, according to which all distinctions whatsoever are lost in the relationless unity of the one being. We should notice, finally, that all stages are subordinate to the last, and when we look back in thought as it were from the consummation, all previous stages appear as interventions of error and darkness. There is no security that we shall pass through all the stages in the present life, and so a certain amount of eschatological teaching is in place, though it should be pointed out that eschatology generally is of subordinate importance, as might be expected in a system in which any future state which is describable, cannot for that very reason be ultimate. It is provided, however, that, if we should pass from this life while we are still on one of the subordinate

levels, we shall receive the recompense due to our attainment. We may pass by 'the way of the fathers,' e.g., but not by 'the way of the gods.' And if the lower procession be our destiny we shall return to the world again to take up once more the burden of mortality and move painfully on wards to the ultimate goal, to the condition in which 'the soul, transcending dreamless sleep, is absolutely wakeful in its union with the universal subject of thought and exercises in perfect stillness an infinitely real consciousness of all in the Self.'[1]

We have in this chapter attempted to trace the general conception of the world which, according to the central principle of the philosophy, must be negated, and we have sketched the conditions, external and internal, passive and active, popular and technical, which have to be fulfilled in order that the final goal may be reached, and the idea of the abstract unity of being, involving the negation of all differences, be realized in the soul of the worshipper. We have tried to describe the world which has to be got rid of—the All which has to be sacrificed to God—according to the requirements of the abstract idealistic Pantheism. We shall now turn to the consideration of certain influences which predispose the Indian mind to the acceptance of such a mystical Pantheism. From this we may pass on to the estimation of the degree of acceptance of this negative position; and, if we find that this acceptance is not thorough-going, we may then treat of the modifications which are felt to be necessary and which have the effect of turning the philosophy into a more naturalistic and concrete Pantheism.

[1] Cf. Barnett, *Brahma Knowledge*, p. 36.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCES FAVOURABLE TO MYSTICAL PANTHEISM AND MODIFICATIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF CONCRETE PANTHEISM

The goal which has been set before us is the attainment, or rather the discovery, of unity with the Ultimate Being, which Being is indescribable except by pairs of contradictory predicates or by negative predicates, and leaves no reality outside itself, not even the reality of the human self-consciousness. What influences, specially obvious in India, may we assign as conducing towards the acceptance of such an abstract ideal ?

In our treatment of the Vedic religion we have already referred to the influence of the physical universality of the objects of worship. In India there are conditions which emphasize this universality. When, e.g., the sun shines forth in its strength, there seems to be no protection from it, and the sky is an overarching immensity, stretching to a level horizon. There is little friendly variety of hill and valley, and, alone in a vast monotonous plain, the worshipper is often without relief from the thought of his own insignificance. 'When the sun rises we do not need a lantern' is a favourite metaphor, and there seems to be here a suggestion of the idea of the sun as overwhelming and irresistible, and all-absorbing. When one stands alone in the midst of an Indian plain and lets the eye wander in all directions to the horizon, the sense of monotony

and infinitude presses upon the mind and the individual seems but a speck in the hugeness of the universe. The influence is like that of the plains of Anatolia as described by Sir William Ramsay: 'The great eye of Heaven, unwearying, unchanging, inexorable, watches you from its rising over the level horizon till it sinks below the same level again. You breathe an atmosphere of inevitable acquiescence in the infinite power which is around you, all-pervasive and compelling. The sense of individuality and personal power grows weak and shrinks away, not daring to show itself in the human consciousness.' [1]

The absence of variety, the lack of perennially flowing musical streams, the long straight roads with seemingly no turning anywhere, all tend to divert the interest from the parts to the whole. It is not a land which is obviously joyous, hardly, in appearance at least, a 'good land, a land of brooks of waters, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.' And then, again, the forces of nature sometimes show themselves as terrible in their strength. The devastating earthquakes, the sweeping torrential rains, the awesome thunderstorms, deepen the sense of human insignificance. In such circumstances there is little room for joyous appreciation of nature. The average man in India has little appreciation of natural beauty, and can behold unmoved or with little more than an indifferent glance even the most gorgeous sunset. Nature seems rather to foster the desire for escape, and the negative attitude which is the ideal basis of the possibility of such escape. The minds of men become 'serious and resigned.'

In this connection it may not be out of place to mention also the enervating effect of the Indian

[1] *Education of Christ*, p. 30.

climate. It has often been pointed out that the character of the gods a people worship is to some extent determined by climatic conditions. Only one who has lived for a considerable time in India can fully understand the state of physical and mental lethargy which is often induced under the prevailing climatic conditions. There is a constant temptation to evade responsibility by blaming the climate, and Indians are as liable to this temptation as non-Indians. The result in the religious sphere is to produce a liking for quietism—mystical moods and trance-like states such as are described by James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, and which he also connects very closely with physical conditions. Even those who inherit a more practical attitude to life know well the mood of dreaminess, the sense of unreality, the disposition to 'let things slide' which long absence from a bracing climate inevitably produces. Such moods seem to be the most favourable of all for the growth of the philosophy which is offered in the mystical Pantheism of the Upanishads.

Amongst other predisposing causes we may mention the slight hold which the Indian mind seems to have upon the idea of a natural order of things. In this connection, however, it may be difficult to distinguish between the causes and the effects of the particular philosophical attitude under consideration. Besides, this uncertain grasp upon a fixed order of things is by no means peculiar to India, but is the characteristic of all pre-scientific thought. Still, its operation in India seems somewhat different from what we observe in other lands. Elsewhere it led to irregular conceptions of the natural order and to mistaken attempts to manipulate natural forces, but it seems rarely to have led to such a lack of interest in the world of ordinary

experience as it did in India. To the thinkers of other lands the particularity of the natural world was indeed an engima, but it was an enigma which they hoped to solve and towards the solution of which they made more or less successful attempts. But scientific interest seems to have been of extremely slow growth in India. To the Indian philosopher the world is also an enigma, but not an enigma which he hopes or even cares to solve. Instead of seeking for greater fullness of meaning in the connection of the parts, he is content with the admission of the meaninglessness of the whole, and substitutes for a solution an assertion of insolubility.

As another of the predisposing causes we may note the political conditions of India. The influence of politics upon thought is a commonplace. It would be an interesting investigation, e.g., to trace the effect of monarchical rule upon the Hebrew conception of God and upon Aristotle's conception of the ideal state. Historically, in India the fact with which we have to deal is despotism. Much of the history of India has been the record of a succession of despotisms, and the very succession would hinder any attempt to develop the resources of the country. The provision of advantages for the enjoyment of invading enemies would be recognized as a futile proceeding, and inactivity would seem to be the only common-sense policy. Further, the general effect of despotism is to diminish the importance of the individual and enhance the importance of the superior power. Where only the despot is free and society beneath him is monotonously lacking in rights and resembles in its dead-level of submission the plains of the country in which it exists, when all rights and property of the higher as well as of the lower are based merely upon the caprice of the monarch, there can be no great sense of the worth

of the individual. Hegel says that 'freedom can exist only when individuality is recognized as having its positive and real existence in the Divine Being,' and, conversely, there is at least a probability that, where freedom does not exist, there a sense of the ultimate value of the individual for life and interpretation will be almost impossible. The individual has had developed within him the habit of surrendering his rights without question, and does this even within the sphere of philosophy. Under a despotism, also, he is forbidden the feeling of strength which comes from free co-operation with his fellows. The system has made him and makes him, and not he the system.

We may notice also that the influence of caste works in the direction of minimizing the worth of the individual. As Hegel again points out, 'the peculiarity of the system is that the will of man has nothing to do with it.' It is an iron necessity to which the individual must simply submit without question.

When these influences are transferred to the philosophical sphere, and become operative there, it just means that the One is exalted at the expense of the many. Such circumstances encourage a mystical and abstract form of Pantheism. In Europe also, toward the close of the Middle Ages, similar conditions produced somewhat similar effects, and it has always been the case that, if the demand for religious satisfaction arises in the midst of conditions which are depressing to individuality, this depression of individuality exercises a considerable influence upon the character of the solution which is offered. Faith in an all-absorbing unity becomes exceedingly natural. Until the spiritual value of the individual is realized, only one form of metaphysical principle—a pantheistic, monistic unity—

is probable. As Lotze long ago pointed out, we cannot get a proper grasp of the creative idea until we come to the creation of spirits—'Only a spirit can assert its independence. It alone feels and represents itself as the common centre of its own states and so brings itself into that opposition to God who created it which can only be conceived as existing between the Creator and the created. On the other hand, a thing which was not conscious of itself, and which did not feel or in some fashion or other enjoy what we may call being for itself, would never be anything more than a *self-less state of the creator, and there would be nothing by which it could be distinguished from the reality which it already has as a thought of God.*'[1]

The words which we have italicized seem to indicate the conditions and character of a tendency which has been carried to far greater lengths in Indian philosophy than Lotze contemplated. Where there is no sense of freedom, and consequently no sense of worth, the resulting philosophy is always of a mystical and abstract type. Despotism produces —or, at least, intensifies—that state of quietness and passivity which we recognize as the proper subjective attitude for the doctrines of Indian philosophy. The inaction which was to a large extent forced upon the people created a predisposition in favour of a philosophy which would give, as it were, metaphysical warrant for such inaction. The tendency towards such a philosophy does not, of course, always indicate a clear consciousness of abandonment and lethargy on the part of those who hold it, and the implications of the system adopted may be by no means obvious to the individual adherents of the system. At the same time, whether it be adopted consciously or unconsciously, whether

[1] Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 93.

with a clear sense of helplessness or not, the chosen system of thought will be on the whole of an abstract and passive character. It will not be one which will encourage us to take arms against a sea of troubles : it will rather be one which will allure us to acquiescence in the present state of things, and create in us a longing for irresponsible absorption in the ultimate Being.

Such are some of the predisposing causes of the widespread acceptance of the central position of the Upanishad philosophy. We may now go on to note certain modifications of its abstract character, causing it to turn more definitely in the direction of naturalistic Pantheism. Our first step will be to trace the tendency in Indian philosophy towards laying more definite stress on the *All* than upon God, though this tendency does not work itself out to extremes. It may be pointed out, generally, that empiricism is never far away from idealism : the pendulum of thought swings from the one to the other. If, influenced by an abstract idealism, the facts of our ordinary experience are denied, sooner or later these facts claim their rights again, and demand recognition. There is a continual oscillation between the abstract point of view—which often claims, somewhat unjustifiably, to represent the point of view of pure philosophy—and the popular point of view which has grown up without much conscious reflection out of traditional mythology, ritual, and practice. Ordinary procedure of thought cannot be permanently reversed. The Eleatics may assert the sole reality of being, but they have also to reckon with the school of Heraclitus. Plato, following the Eleatics, may attempt to confine his thought to the pure motionless world of ideas, but, in order to complete his philosophy, he also has to make some attempt to realize the con-

nection between ideas and the world of ordinary phenomena.

So we may expect that some attempt will be made even by the Upanishad writers themselves—and perhaps still more by their successors and interpreters—to reconcile their abstract doctrine with their inherited religious traditions and with the experience of their every-day life. In short, the need is felt of giving greater value to the facts of ordinary experience. We may deny the reality of our world, but we have still to live in it and therefore must make some adjustment of our thought to it, even though the necessity for such adjustment may be only a temporary one.

This consideration, however, does not imply, as Deussen seems to hold, that there is first of all a period in which the idealistic point of view is wholly in the ascendant and that this is followed by a period of accommodation to popular influences. Deussen's theory seems to be that the tendencies in the direction of a more popular Pantheism are grafts upon the original abstract idealism, and that this latter is not only more fundamental but also more primitive. Its priority is temporal as well as logical. We may grant the more fundamental character, but it does not follow that the abstract Pantheism is the more primitive. One of Deussen's arguments for his position is that the adherents of the different Vedic schools, starting as they did from very various presuppositions, could not have arrived at the exactly similar conclusion of the sole reality of the ātman. He thinks it much more likely that this doctrine was borrowed in all its rigour from another non-Brahmanic source and subsequently adapted to the requirements of the different schools. It is impossible to dogmatize in a matter of this kind, as the problem of the chronology of Indian philo-

sophy is an almost hopeless one. It may be said, however, that if we are to introduce chronology into the matter at all, the probabilities are against Deussen. We have traced a development within the Vedic period from primitive polytheism to a more unitary position, and it is most probable that in later periods also the development was in the same direction—from multiplicity to unity rather than from unity to multiplicity, i.e. from concrete Pantheism to abstract Pantheism, rather than in the opposite direction. Even if the strict doctrine of unity did not grow out of the ritual of the Vedic and Brahmanic schools, it must have developed out of somewhat similar conditions; and the attempt to harmonize it with the doctrine of these schools is but the attempt to adjust it once more to an environment such as that out of which it sprang. Dr. Barnett speaks of the Upanishad writers as 'struggling slowly from the pantheistic standpoint of the Vedas to the strictly idealistic position,' and this probably represents the true procedure. But it is not to be imagined that the popular point of view is entirely transcended. We should rather say that the popular and the strictly philosophical attitude exist side by side, and that there is continual oscillation between the two, with constant effort to find more adequate adjustments. If the abstract position has been treated of first, we must remember that this has been mainly for the purposes of exposition and does not commit us to a chronology. The method of adaptation which we are now to consider was not one necessarily subsequent in time to the complete establishment of the idealistic position. Further, the adaptation must have been frequently repeated, as ever and again the necessity of adjustment to the world of ordinary experience made itself felt. Pantheism has always a double movement—like the

systole and the diastole of the heart. There is the movement away from the world of experience, and, as inevitably, the movement towards it again. We wish to seize the movement of thought at that point in the constantly repeated process where it turns from the direction of abstraction and seeks to adapt itself once more to the actual, which it is uncomfortably conscious it has left too far away.

The motives to the actualizing movement of thought may be various. There is, first of all, general dissatisfaction with the inversion of human experience which we have just been considering. There is a natural predilection in favour of the trustworthiness of human faculty, and any denial of this trustworthiness produces a sense of discomfort from which sooner or later we desire to escape. We cannot be permanently content with a sort of paralysis of speech or aphasia in regard to the ultimate existence. Further, the inconsistencies of the *māyā* and *avidyā* doctrine which we have already referred to become glaringly apparent. We may assert, with great philosophic boldness, that the world is an illusion, but we find that this illusion has itself to be explained. We are on the horns of the dilemma of holding either that Nescience is purely negative, in which case it can produce nothing, not even an illusion, or that it is a real originating principle, in which case that which it produces cannot be wholly an illusion. The dilemma is an awkward one, and we are inclined to extricate ourselves by giving greater emphasis to the position which is supported also by ordinary experience, i.e. we admit that the world of experience is not wholly an illusion but an array of concrete facts requiring explanation. We pass from the idea of ignorance as a power of obstruction to ignorance as a power of development. We go further, and admit that,

after all, 'the common understanding of man is conscious of the existence of the finite,' and that what is philosophically despised as ignorance includes a knowledge of the actual. Ignorance, however, which includes a knowledge of the actual ceases to be ignorance in the ordinary sense of the term and becomes a cosmological principle.

The sense of uneasiness is further evidenced in the series of contradictory predicates by which the one existing Self is described. They represent a more or less unsuccessful attempt to bring the Self into relation with a concrete world of experience, and they imply an admission of the reality of that world. They indicate a certain degree of discontent with the idea that we get nearer reality when we have to hold our peace and say nothing about it. More positively, there is an approach towards the position that 'objects grow in reality towards us as we define their various qualities.' We are not content to deny—we must also affirm. If there is an uncomfortable collision between the denial and the affirmation, we must just endure this and hold the contradictory predicates together in our minds as peacefully as we can until better days come for thought. This probably explains the series of contradictions to which we have already referred, as, e.g., *Chhāndogya*, iii. 14. 5 : "This my soul in my heart, smaller than rice-corn, or barley-corn, or mustard-seed. This my soul greater than heaven, greater than the worlds.' In the *Taittirīya Upanishad*, also, we read that the Brahman is 'hidden in the cavity of the heart and in farthest space.' What specially interests us is that many of the contradictory predicates used are spatial. They therefore seem to imply the taking up into the realm of highest being of forms belonging to the world of sense. They express the feeling that, even if what is said can be

said only in a contradictory manner when we use these forms, yet it is better to make the attempt to relate the ultimate and the world of sense. We must give some value to the world of experience, the great world to which we apply the term 'nature' in the ordinary meaning of the word. By much philosophical reasoning we may reach the position that its reality is all an arbitrary construction of the mind and that all true reality is shut within the 'cavity of the heart.' But yet we feel that this is not adequate, that we cannot pack the choir of heaven and earth within the narrow compass of our own minds, and so we think of the Self as stretching far out beyond our own self, penetrating and pervading all things through the boundless spaces of the world. We are lonely in the midst of our denials, and we wish that they were not necessary. The making of them seems to put us out of harmony with our actual environment.

We attribute the same feeling of loneliness to the Divine Self with which we are in communion, only that, in referring the feeling to the Divine, we transform it into a causal principle, and it ceases to be a merely subjective distress of soul. Perhaps such a mood and such an attribution may underlie the famous passage in *Chhāndogya*, vi. 2. 5: 'In the beginning there was that only which is one only, without a second. . . . It thought, May I be many, may I grow forth'—and then the process of 'growing forth' is described. Thus the world is reached again, and the ordinary experience of mankind is rehabilitated.

The problem is, however, to re-establish the world of experience and, at the same time, to retain something of the character of the idealistic position. It will not do, on the one hand, to refuse any concession to the empirical consciousness, or, on the

other, to admit the full reality of the world which exists for that consciousness. An escape from the difficulty is found in the use of *symbols*, which give relief in two ways. They bring the absolute reality into connection with the world of sense. Their very employment implies a recognition of that world, just as language implies a recognition of other persons with whom we may speak. But at the same time they do not commit the philosophers to a full admission of the reality of the world of sense. They are *merely* words and pictures, names and forms, under which God may be described in such a way as to be intelligible to the worshipper, and, if the vulgar crowd mistake their purpose, and attribute to these signs a reality which they do not possess, the philosopher is not responsible for this nor for the acknowledged fact that 'symbols in the hands of the multitude may very readily become idols.'

This use of symbols is exceedingly common in connection with such an idealistic philosophy as we have before us. The activity of pure thought seems to have exhausted itself in the movement upwards towards unity, and in the downward process towards particularity has to be content with makeshifts. Caird describes the same necessity in connection with Plotinus: 'The logical movement of Plotinus, the movement in which he is guided by definite and explicit thought, is always upwards, while, in describing the movement downwards, he has to take refuge in metaphors and analogies, the full meaning of which is not explicitly stated or realized.'[2]

We see, then, that the use of symbols and metaphors is not always of definite purpose or fully

[1] Cf. Deussen, *Upanishads*, p. 93.
[2] *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, p. 234.

conscious. It also indicates a certain exhaustion of thought and a more or less involuntary procedure of the mind, caused by the absence of mediating conceptions of a strictly intellectual character. In the scheme of mystical Pantheism no place can, according to strict logic, be found for the sense-world, and yet it must be related somehow or other to the ultimate principle. An attempt is therefore made to cover over the difficulty by the use of metaphors and symbols which are either deliberately chosen as substitutes for thought, or, in more ingenuous manner, are simply accepted in lieu of thought by those who are not fully conscious of the philosophical inadequacy of these symbols. The whole use of symbols involves, of course, a departure from the strictly idealistic position and a disregard of the warning afterwards given by Śaṅkara against transferring the qualities of the subject to the object (i.e. admitting the reality of the particular), or the qualities of the object to the subject (i.e. admitting the describability of the indescribable). It is an attempt to indicate the character of the side of reality turned towards us without asking very definitely how the predicateless Absolute can have such an aspect or what precise degree of reality is to be attributed to the manifestation.

It is impossible to find any symbol which does not implicitly admit the reality of the finite world. Even those which are most closely associated with the movement of thought towards an abstract position contain such an admission, as we have already indicated. Take, e.g., the symbol of the ocean into which all rivers flow. Cf. ' the Self is that into which all things pass away, as the ocean is the one thing into which all waters flow' (*Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iv. 5. 12). We have here a confession of the reality of finite things. Even rivers flowing into

the sea have a reality both before and after they enter. Even though they lose their separate name and form they still retain their reality as constituent parts of the ocean. This metaphor, therefore, can hardly be pressed to illustrate either the unreality of finite things or their complete negation in the All. In relation to them the All becomes comprehensive indeed, but not exclusive.

The same impression of veiled admission of the actual is produced even by other metaphors which are perhaps more closely illustrative of the movement of thought we are at present considering. One of the favourite metaphors is that of salt. The application of this metaphor occupies a whole section in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (cf. vi. 15). The disciple is told to throw salt into the water and then wait until the morning. In the morning he is sent again to the water, and is told to taste it in every part. On the surface, in the middle, and at the bottom he finds it salt—there is no part of it which is not salt. So the lesson of the all-pervasive character of Brahman is taught, and at the same time it is admitted that there is a world for Brahman to pervade. The water which the salt modifies is an actuality, otherwise the salt could not modify it. Similarly, the world which Brahman pervades is an actuality, otherwise Brahman could not pervade it. The simile in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, i. 4. 7 is on much the same lines. Here Brahman is said to enter into the world to the very tip of the finger-nails, as a razor might be fitted into a razor-case.

It is true, of course, that other metaphors are more in accordance with negative teaching as to the unreality of the world. Finite things, e.g., are compared to the sparks which fly from a central fire. As sparks rise and gleam and fade away in the darkness and no more exist, so do the finite

things of the world reveal themselves to our senses but for a moment, and then fade away for ever. Cf. *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, ii. 1. 20 : 'As sparks come forth from fire, thus do all senses, all worlds, all Devas, all beings come forth from the Self.' The same idea underlies the symbol of the crystal upon which the colours come and go, but which itself alone remains the permanent reality. But still, even sparks and colours have a subordinate reality, and so the illustrations are not wholly consistent with the denial of the finite world.

The purpose of other symbols seems to be to show the monistic character of the evolution of the universe. Even though the reality of the ordinary has to be admitted, it must be clearly shown that the things of the finite world have no other source than Brahman. All doctrines of the creation of the world out of an extraneous matter must be rejected. Everything must come from Brahman, just as a spider spins its web out of its own body.[1] And the process must be regarded as necessary throughout. There is little creative determination or choice on the part of Brahman. Things are sometimes described as springing from him in as natural and uncontrolled a way as the hairs spring out of the head of a man.

Thus, by means of these symbols, we get the conception of a graduated series of emanations from Brahman. Emanation takes the place of identity. The divine unity is laid hold of by the conditions of time and space and becomes a process, conceived of as a rule in a strictly pantheistic manner and maintaining its unity with the one divine source.

This process may be considered further from the point of view of its reconciliation to mythological ideas and its adjustment to a system of cosmogonical

[1] Cf. *Bṛiha.* ii. 1. 20.

deities and forces. We find that certain symbols used are relics of ritual practices, and that directions for sacrificial procedure become descriptions of cosmical development. The transference between ritual and cosmogony is not always direct. The ritual is sometimes spiritualized, or is at least made a procedure in the body of the worshipper instead of remaining simply as a manipulation of external things. It is thus brought at least one stage nearer the point at which the individual self may be identified with the self of the universe. The sacrifice which originally consisted in the pouring of milk upon the fire is transformed into the inspiration and expiration of breath, i.e. the fire of the *prāṇa* is substituted for the actual fire. The sacrificial rite is thus brought into connection with the air which the individual and the universal share in common, and, by virtue of this community, obtains relation to a cosmical principle. This is simply one illustration, amongst many, showing the possibility of adjustment between ritual and cosmology, but not necessarily giving us the order of procedure followed in other cases.

In addition to the feeling of loneliness above referred to, which is anthropomorphically ascribed to Brahman, the motive to a series of emanations is sometimes described as *tapas*, e.g. in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, i. 1. 2, we have a verse which is variously translated as ' Brahman becomes enlarged, ready to create the world through meditation,' and ' Brahman begins to swell through fervid self-coercion.' Max Müller holds that the word *tapas* contains the two ideas of ' warmth ' and ' thought.' He therefore translates it as ' brooding.' Perhaps the phrase ' incubating thought ' would express the idea. But in any case the underlying conception is that it is

[1] Cf. *Kaushītakidarauysha*, ii. 5. 1.

through some disturbance of equilibrium, through some introduction of motion, mental or otherwise, that Brahman comes to produce the world out of himself—not, be it observed, out of any unintelligent second principle. If we emphasize the mental side of the process, and say that by *contemplation* Brahman produces the finite world, we may here gain the hint that it is by contemplation (tinged with asceticism) that finite beings may put themselves in harmony with the cosmical process and return to absorption in Brahman. The ascetic idea is by no means absent from the word *tapas*. As Deussen points out, 'In this word the ancient idea of the heat which serves to promote the incubation of the egg of the universe blends with the ideas of the exertion, fatigue, self-renunciation by means of which the creator is transmuted in whole or in part into the universe which he proposes to create.'[1] In this we have a distinct metaphysical justification for asceticism on the part of the individual. He may reproduce the self-renunciation of Brahman, and thus gain the same power of liberation from, or rather control over, the cosmos which Brahman has created. It is important, for our main thesis, to note the attitude almost of disapproval of the cosmos which is indicated in this idea of emanation involving annoyance, labour, fatigue, and renunciation, and there is here no idea of the pain being transmuted through the higher idea of sacrificing love. Even if we do not read into the word *tapas* the whole fullness of meaning of the word 'penance,' we at least gain the idea that the process of evolution is neither gladly welcomed nor even looked upon as altogether desirable.

Turning now to the actual stages of the process, theologically considered, we find that they corre-

[1] Cf. *Upanishads*, p. 66.

spond roughly to the three stages of waking consciousness, dreams, and dreamless sleep through which the individual attains unity with Brahman. The cosmogony consists in a reversal of the order of the subjective stages and a transference of them from the psychological to the cosmological sphere. To every subjective stage we have a corresponding cosmical stage by which an objective explanation is offered of the experiences which the individual may have at that stage.

The neuter Brahmăn, the unmanifested, becomes the masculine Brahmān. By a slightly fuller determination, this becomes Īśvara or Parameśwara, sometimes called the *kāraṇa Brahman*, in which form Brahman is said to assume the cosmic causal body. At this stage he corresponds to or sums up the experiences of dreamless sleep. He is the Universal Spirit, or Demiurge, described in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* as dwelling in and actualizing the earth, water, fire, air—in fact, all living beings and all minds,—but itself unseen, unknown, unthought upon. He is not, for the most part, to be conceived of in a theistic manner as a deity who may be regarded objectively and to whom reverence may thus be paid. He is simply a stage in the evolution, an impersonal spirit, pervading all things. If we connect with this conception the ideas of *māyā* and *avidyā*, we may regard the Īśvara as the ' first figment of the world fiction ' whose unreality will at the close of the age be rediscovered and acted upon and who will thus be reabsorbed in the characterless Brahman. This Īśvara Gough describes as ' the Māyin or Māyāvin, the arch-illusionist, the world-projecting deity, himself a figment of the cosmic fiction, himself an unreality for the philosopher intent on the one and only truth, relatively a reality for the multitude.' [1]

[1] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 50.

To the sum of dreaming consciousness corresponds *Hiraṇyagarbha* (germ of gold) under which form Brahman assumes the cosmic subtle body. In this guise Brahman is probably to be regarded as the power which makes the first stage of individualization possible—that individualization which consists in separate mental action but which has not yet reached concrete embodiment in material form. Hiraṇyagarbha is sometimes described as the *kārya* Brahman—the effect God, the conscious totality of all effects.

To the stage of waking life corresponds *Vaiśvānara*, or *Virāj*—the 'cosmic gross body'—the power which gives unity to the bodily individualities making up the world.

The devolution of Brahman is treated of from a less mythological and more physical point of view in the identification of him with vital breath as found both in the individual and the universe. Thus we have the twin conceptions of *prāṇa* and *vāyu*, the breath of the body being paralleled by the god of the wind. The breath is superior to all other faculties of the body. This superiority is set forth in naive fashion in *Chhāndogya*, v. 1, in the account of the rivalry of the senses: 'The five senses quarrelled together, who was the best, saying, I am better, I am better.' The test proposed by their originator, Prajāpati, is that the sense 'by whose departure the body seems worse than worst,' shall be regarded as the best. The senses (speech, sight, hearing, mind) take their departure, one by one, and yet the others are able to exist. Finally, it is the turn of breath to depart, and this departure is found to be a more serious matter. At the time of departure the breath 'tears up the other senses as a horse, going to start, might tear up the pegs by which he is tethered.' The other senses perceive

the critical nature of the situation and acknowledge the superiority of *prāṇa*. Similarly, in the form of *vāyu*, breath or wind is recognized as a pre-eminently important cosmical principle. All the more important world objects and the forces of nature come out of air and into air they return. Cf. *Kaushītaki*, ii. 12 : 'All these (fire, sun, moon, lightning) having entered the air though dead, do not vanish, and out of the very air they rise again.' *Vāyu* is recognized as a leading cosmical symbol in *Taittirīya* 1. 1 : 'Reverence to Brahman, reverence to the *vāyu*, for thou art the visible Brahman. Thee will I recognize as the visible Brahman.'

Another pair of conceptions is *manas*, the mind, and *ākāśa*, ether. Brahman is to be worshipped under both these symbols. An attempt is thus made to give a more psychical aspect to the manifestations of Brahman, and this would imply a reversal of the procedure by which, in the *Chhāndogya*, v. 1, superiority was given to *prāṇa*. The mind is said to have four feet or quarters—speech, breath, sight, and hearing.[1] In the seventh book of the same Upanishad, however, *manas* occurs only third in an ascending scale, and there are many important aspects placed above it. This conflict of opinion may be noted as pointing to the fact that *prāṇa* is to be taken in a broader sense than mere breath. It is rather to be conceived of as the whole of the spirit or conscious self, with both psychical and physical aspects. There is an identification between *prāṇa*, breath, and *prajñā*, consciousness ; cf. *Kaushītaki Upanishad*, iii. 3 : 'What is *prāṇa* that is *prajñā*, what is *prajñā* that is *prāṇa*, for together they live in this body, and together they go out of it.' There is no clear line of demarcation between the physical

[1] Cf. *Chhāndogya*, ii. 18. 2

and the psychical, and this makes the account of the manifestation of Brahman at once easier and less explicit.

The cosmical parallel of *manas* is ether or *ākāśa*, which is also regarded (in *Chhāndogya*, iii. 18) as representative of Brahman, and worthy of worship. It is difficult at first sight to see the connection between *manas* and *ākāśa*, unless we are to regard *ākāśa* as equivalent simply to space and therefore as the form in which objects appear to the *manas*. From this it would be but a short step to the conception of the one being as manifested both in the mind and in space.

There are many other symbols under which the devolution of Brahman is described, but it is not necessary for our present purpose that we should go into greater detail. We may, however, in conclusion notice several passages in which generalized intermediate and semi-mythological conceptions are brought into connection with the elements as known to the physicists or in some cases are dispensed with altogether. In the latter case Brahman is regarded as producing directly the elements which, when brought under names and forms, make up the sum-total of cognizable reality. If any one of the ordinary elements is to be regarded as fundamental this place might be claimed by water.[1] But usually three, or even five, elements are mentioned. In *Chhāndogya*, vi. 2. 5, the lonely Brahman, thinking that he will 'become many,' sends forth fire, then water, then earth or food. In the *Praśna Upanishad*, iv. 8, five elements (earth, water, light, air and ether) are mentioned as 'resting in the highest Atman.' So the material elements are supplied which, through the principle of individualization, may be further developed and assume specific form

[1] Cf. *Bṛihadaraṇyaka*, i. 22.

with qualities capable of designation by means of a name.[1]

We have described the various aspects of the process by which, in the Upanishads, an attempt is made to give value to our ordinary experience and to move from abstract idealism in a more concretely pantheistic direction. In other words, we have traced the passing of negative into positive Pantheism, or at least the oscillation between the two views. The monism of the system is, as already observed, steadily maintained. There is no dualistic admission of an alien material out of which the world may be fashioned. Everything comes from Brahman himself. And he pervades everything as an immanent principle, 'he enters up to the finger-tips.' Cf. also *Īśā Upanishad*, v. 6. : 'Whoe'er beholds all living creatures as in him, and him the universal spirit in all, henceforth regards no creature with contempt.' Into him everything returns at the end of the age. Thus the whole process—in its threefold aspect of origination, growth, and dissolution—all is Brahman. Cf. *Taittirīya*, iii. 3. 1 : 'That from which these beings are born, that by which when born they live, that into which they enter at their death, that is Brahman.' As has been said, the original identity is laid hold of by the conditions of time and space, but the plurality into which it is thus developed is a plurality within a unity. Origination, development, and dissolution are all phases of the *One*.

There are indeed tendencies in a theistic direction. Brahman, in his aspect of Īśvara, is represented as almost a personal Creator (cf. *Śvetāśvatara*, iii. 20), who may be worshipped by men as over against themselves. And there is sometimes a hint of the conception of

[1] Cf. *Bṛihadaraṇyaka*, i. 4. 7.

God as transcendent and as director of the operations of secondary causes. For the most part, however, the conception of Íśvara is that of a mere stage in the evolutionary process, and is hardly to be taken as indicating a theistic point of view.

The difficulty still remains of deciding whether the positive pantheistic tendency is to be regarded as a permanent attitude of the Upanishad writers, or whether it was merely a temporary concession made, as it were, under protest and for the sake of weaker brethren. In other words, is the world-process a reality or is it an illusion? It is probably impossible to answer this question if we confine our attention to the Upanishads themselves, and it will be more profitable to ask which interpretation established itself as authoritative in later philosophy. We shall take up this question in the next chapter, and shall attempt to come to some sort of decision on the matter before we proceed to consider the effect of the Upanishad conception on our sense of the value of life. We shall close this chapter with a brief reference to certain attempts which were made in the Upanishads towards a reconciliation of the attention paid to the world-process with a fundamentally idealistic position. There are certain signs which seem to show that the world-process was not taken altogether seriously.

There are, e.g., forced attempts at identification of the various stages of the process, as if the identity has to be preserved at all costs. We may compare the quotation above given from *Kausītaki*, iii. 3,[1] and also the play upon the word *Satya* in an earlier passage from the same Upanishad (i. 7): 'What is different from the gods and from the sense, that is *Sat*, but the gods and the sense are *tyam*. Therefore by this name *satya* is called all this, whatever there

[1] p. 179.

is, all this thou art.' Again, only small and comparatively insignificant portions of the original Brahman enter into the process of creation. There is an infinite reserve, and this gives us the idea that creation is of subordinate value. Śaṅkara holds that the same idea is involved in the conflicting accounts which are given of the process of creation. This confusion indicates a certain amount of indifference—it is not worth while to attain consistency in regard to a matter of so little importance. 'The passages about creation, and the like, only form subordinate members of the passages treating of Brahman. . . . A conflict of statements regarding the world would not even matter greatly, seeing that the creation of the world and similar topics are not at all what the Scripture wishes to teach.' [1] A similar impression is produced by the assertion that creation is simply the sport of Brahman—a reminiscence of the 'intoxication' of Indra described in the *Ṛig-Veda*. This may certainly indicate merely failure to supply an explanation, but it may also indicate the small importance of the world for which an explanation is required. It would, however, be but fair to notice in this connection the close association of the idea of joy with sport, which association is emphasized in some recent writings of Sir Rabindranath Tagore.

Further, the world-process seems to have no ultimate meaning—it leads to nothing. At the end of the age all things return to the original unity and are as they were in the beginning. An attempt is made, finally, to show that the world-process is simply the concealment of reality. Particular so-called entities are merely names and forms. If they are revelations of Brahman at all, they are revelations merely of the side turned towards us and not of his essential reality.

[1] *Commentary*, i. 4. 14.

So the conflict between the two points of view goes on, and we are left with two tendencies, one towards abstract idealism and the other towards positive Pantheism. As far as the Upanishads are concerned, the two tendencies remain side by side, and there is little attempt at the subordination of one to the other. For further light on this matter, therefore, we shall turn to the question of the authoritative later interpretation.

CHAPTER VI

THE AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION OF THE TEACHING OF THE UPANISHADS

In the course of the last two chapters we have noted two tendencies—on the one hand, towards a mystical and abstract Pantheism, involving a thoroughgoing denial of ordinary experience, and, on the other hand, towards a Pantheism of a more naturalistic and concrete character, involving a certain amount of concession in favour of ordinary modes of thought. The question now comes up as to which of these two tendencies is to be regarded as fundamentally characteristic of Upanishad doctrine. We cannot hope to gain a very definite answer, as the controversy continues to the present day, and it is difficult to proclaim the victors in a battle which is not yet over. Still, it may be possible to indicate the general character of the dispute and the exact points at issue.

What amount of reality is to be ascribed to the world-system which is outlined by the more positively pantheistic writers? Indication of the existence at least of such a world-system seems to be unavoidable. Is it to be taken as nothing more than a concession to popular ways of thinking, or, if there is any reality in it, what is the character of this reality and its relation to the ultimate unity? In brief, the question comes to be whether the teaching of the Upanishads is that there *is nothing* apart from

or in distinction from Brahman, or that nothing is to be *viewed* apart from Brahman. Are we to give full force to the verse in the *Kaṭha Upanishad*, iv. 11 : ' There is here no difference whatsoever ' ; or are we to be guided rather by the somewhat milder statement of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, ii. 4, 5, ' In truth, he who has seen, heard, comprehended and known the Ātman, by him is this entire universe known ' ?

The teaching of the Upanishads has been concentrated in the Vedānta Sūtras, otherwise called the Brahma Sūtras, the Vyāsa Sūtras, the Bādarāyana Sūtras, &c. The problem under discussion thus resolves itself into establishing the relation between the Vedānta Sūtras and the Upanishads on the one hand, and between these same Sūtras and the various interpretations given of them on the other hand. In connection with the latter relation we have specially to deal with Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, who may be taken as the typical interpreters.

The Vedānta Sūtras, as we have seen, are the result of a long series of efforts to present the teaching of the Upanishads in a philosophical and literary form. They aim, above all, at conciseness, and in many cases the conciseness is so extreme that intelligibility is sacrificed. This desire for brevity has two results. In the first place, compression is apt to pass into selection. There is not room for the presentation of all the aspects of any particular problem under discussion, and the consequence is that perhaps only one aspect is selected. Here we have the foundation of the assertion that the Vedānta Sūtras aim not only at concise statement but also at ' establishing the special interpretation of the Veda adopted in the Sūtra.' In the second place, brevity has brought about the surrender of the Sūtras into the hands of commentators. They are unintelligible without the commentaries, so the

emphasis gets shifted to the latter. The Sūtras have been somewhere described as a mere index to Śaṅkara's commentary, instead of being the basis of it. This of course considerably lessens their value for the preservation and transmission of the pure teaching of the Upanishads.

The place assigned to the Sūtras in what might be called the canon of the Vedānta is by no means definitely fixed. Sometimes they are regarded as part of the Vedānta, but perhaps more commonly as simply a work which discusses the Vedānta. Śaṅkara himself regards the Vedānta as composed of the Upanishads alone, and assigns to the Sūtras the 'purpose of stringing together the flowers of Vedānta passages.'

It is difficult, therefore, to establish the independence of the Sūtras. Their importance is diminished, on the one hand, by the Upanishads, and on the other by the commentaries. At the same time there is sufficiently important matter in the Sūtras to make it a reasonable question how far the commentaries faithfully interpret the Sūtras, though this must always be treated as subordinate to the question how far these same commentaries faithfully represent the teaching of the Upanishads.

The two chief commentaries are those of Śaṅkara, who lived in the ninth century A.D., and Rāmānuja, who lived about the twelfth century. The tendency of the former is towards negation, abstract idealism, and unqualified monism. God is the only reality, and He is absolute unity, exclusive of difference. The attempt to ascribe qualities to Him is the product of the same illusion as gives rise to the indefinite multiplicity of the world of ordinary experience. The only true knowledge is that which has passed beyond all plurality and all qualifications and has reached that undifferenced unity which is the sole

reality of both the knower and the known. The system is known as *Advaitāvāda*.

Rāmānuja's doctrine, on the other hand, tends towards a more concrete form of Pantheism with an admixture of theism. There is no departure from the position that God is the absolute reality, but still the differences of the world of ordinary experience are not mere appearances. They are real modes of the being of God, the Divine Unity going forth into difference; God is not a wholly unqualified being—certain characteristics may be ascribed to Him. He is not only nirguṇam but also saguṇam—in fact, He is sometimes characterized so definitely as to approach the God of theism. Creation is an unfolding or evolution of that which was before unmanifested, and the unfolding is a real process. Finite souls have not the independence and self-subsistence which they would have in a properly theistic system, and at the end of the age both they and the world they inhabit will be reabsorbed in God. They do not, however, wholly lose individuality, though the individuality is related to God as the part to the whole rather than through the relation of communion. Rāmānuja's system may be described as 'monism with a difference,' or as *Vishisṭādvaitāvāda*.

A third system of interpretation may be mentioned, viz. that of Madhvāchārya, the founder of the Mādhva sect. He emphasizes duality at the expense of unity; and, as his system thus departs from pure monism and Pantheism, it does not call for special treatment here.

The influence of Śaṇkara is great, and is steadily growing. He is not the only original commentator on the Sūtras, this fact proving that there was room for considerable difference of opinion. As regards the geographical location of his influence, it may be

stated to be greater in South India than in Bengal and the north. But his influence is to be traced in all schools of philosophy, and he is generally regarded not only as the oldest but also as the most orthodox of the commentators. Further, his system is interesting in itself for its subtlety and depth of thinking and its typical character. It is thoroughly representative of that tendency to abstract idealism of which we have found very considerable traces in the Upanishads, and it voices the spirit of Indian thinkers—such a spirit as found expression in the national literature, e.g. in the *Mahābhārata*, xii. 174 ff. : " When a man has drawn inwards the desires from all sides, as the tortoise gathers in its limbs, he shall behold the light of the Self as the Self in himself. When one fears none and none fears him, when he desires no longer and hates no longer, he passes into Brahman. When he surrenders alike the true and the untrue, sorrow and joy, fear and courage, when he leaves behind him the sweet and the bitter, he will live in peace of soul. Desire is a sickness it is hard for the foolish to abandon, which ages not with man's ageing, which only ends with life itself. Blessed is he who frees himself from it.'

The desire for peace through negation had grown stronger in the centuries which elapsed between the Upanishad period and the time of Śaṅkara. Buddha had lived and died. Śaṅkara satisfies a desire for deliverance widely felt amongst his countrymen and expressed very frequently in their literature. This is perhaps the reason of his popularity and influence.

We have already noted his attitude to the Sūtras. He does not ascribe a great deal of importance to them, and the effect of this is to be seen in the degree of liberty which he allows himself in transforming

them ; whereas Rāmānuja, on the other hand, is, on the whole, able to give a more direct and literal interpretation of these texts. It is, however, possible that just for this reason Śaṅkara may be a more trustworthy guide in interpreting the true spirit of the Upanishads themselves.

A certain more or less historical connection may be traced between Śaṅkara and one of the Upanishads of the Atharva-Veda. The *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* forms the first part of the *Kārikās* of Gauḍapāda, and he was probably the teacher, at one remove—through Govinda—of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara describes his teacher as a ' teacher knowing the true tradition of the Vedānta.' The following is a typical verse from Gaudapāda's *Kārikās* : ' When the individual soul which is held in the bonds of slumber by the beginningless *māyā* awakes, then it knows the eternal sleepless, dreamless non-duality.' The spirit of this quotation is in accordance with the teaching of the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, and we find in this Upanishad many of the germs of Śaṅkara's thought. In i. 17 it is asserted in definite terms that all manifold is illusion, and in this Upanishad also we find the favourite illustration of the stick being mistaken for a serpent. In ii. 19 we are told that ' when the Self is looked upon as *prāṇa*, or as the manifold of things, this is mere illusion.' Throughout there is a very close parallel between this Upanishad and the doctrine of Parmenides, and the attitude of Parmenides to the world of plurality closely resembles that of Śaṅkara.

Śaṅkara's relation to the Upanishads generally is variously stated. It is an attitude of combined freedom and submission. The freer attitude is found in his commentary on i. 1. 2. Here it is said that supreme reverence is to be paid to the Vedānta texts, but the knowledge directly derived

from them is to be supplemented by inference and intuition. 'While, however, the Vedānta passages primarily declare the cause of the origin, &c., of the world, inference also, being an instrument of right knowledge in so far as it does not contradict the Vedānta texts, is not to be excluded as a means of confirming the meaning ascertained. . . . Scriptural texts are not, in the inquiry into Brahman, the only means of knowledge, but scriptural texts on the one hand and intuition on the other are to be had recourse to according to the occasion.' The more submissive and receptive attitude is found in the commentary on ii. 1. 11: 'In matters to be known from Scripture, mere reasoning is not to be relied upon for the following reason also. As the thoughts of men are altogether unfettered, reasoning which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion only has no proper foundation. . . . Nor can we get over this difficulty by accepting as well-founded the reasoning of some person of recognized mental eminence, may he be Kapila or any one else; since we observe that even men of the most undoubted mental eminence such as Kapila, Kāṇāda, and other founders of philosophical schools have contradicted one another. The true nature of the cause of the world, on which final emancipation depends, cannot, on account of excessive abstruseness, even be thought of without the help of the holy texts. The perfection of the knowledge which is found in the Vedas cannot be denied by any logicians of the past, present, or future. We have thus established the perfection of that knowledge which reposes on the Upanishads.'

Rāmānuja takes up a much more independent attitude towards the Vedānta texts or Upanishads. He will not admit the appeal from experience to

Scripture in regard to the vexed question of the reality of the manifold. He turns the tables on his opponents by showing that, if their view of the matter is correct, then Scripture also is to be regarded as false, seeing that its very existence involves a certain amount of concession to plurality. 'If perception gives rise to perverse cognition because it is based on the imagination of plurality, Scripture also is in no better case—for it is based on the very same view.'[1] In view of this more critical attitude towards the sacred texts, we may expect that in cases where there is any conflict between the Upanishads and the Vedānta Sūtras, Rāmānuja will feel more free to follow the plain meaning of the Sūtras, and will not consider that his duty as an orthodox man compels him to wrest that meaning in order to bring it more into accordance with what he takes to be the teaching of the Upanishads themselves. He will feel that he has more mental leisure to penetrate to the true meaning of the Sūtras. He is not hurried away to the consideration of another authority, nor tempted to think that it is a matter of indifference whether he understands the true meaning of the Sūtras or not, seeing that in any case there is a higher authority to fall back upon. Similarly Śaṅkara's greater respect for the authority of the Upanishads will lead him to be more careful in his interpretation of their teaching. Generally speaking, we may say that a consideration of the respective attitude of the two commentators towards their authorities would lead us to anticipate that Rāmānuja will be the more trustworthy guide as regards the teaching of the Sūtras and Śaṅkara as regards the teaching of the Upanishads. Anticipation, however, is not proof, and we have now to proceed to a further examination of the interpreta-

[1] Rāmānuja's *Commentary*—Thibaut's translation, p. 73.

tions given upon certain points and an estimation of the validity of these interpretations.

The Doctrine of God.—Śaṅkara, as we have seen, asserts that the highest Brahman is *nirguṇam*, or without qualities. Nothing can be predicated of him except his reality. There is one absolute, eternal, non-changing consciousness, 'whose nature is pure undifferenced intelligence, free from all distinctions whatsoever.'[1] In fact, it is hardly possible even to speak of a conscious subject, for the difference between consciousness and the conscious subject is due to an unreal principle of individualization. Śaṅkara asserts unity at the expense of all difference. It is not a unity that includes difference, and, seeing that the unity must at all costs be maintained, the only course is to deny the differences and all plurality and all qualification.

Rāmānuja, on the other hand, believes in an almost personal God, an all-powerful and wise ruler of the world, which has been permeated by His spirit. Brahman is not *nirguṇam*, but *saguṇam*; he is the abode of all good qualities. Matter and individual spirits form his body, and are the real manifestations of his nature. In other words, Rāmānuja pushes back the conception of Īśvara until it becomes identified with Brahman, and according to him there is no intention discoverable either in the Sūtras or the Upanishads of drawing a distinction between the two. Rāmānuja is able to show, with comparative ease, that the opening section of the Sūtras is in accordance with his view. One predicate after another is applied to Brahman. In the second Sūtra Brahman is said to be that from which the origin of all things comes, and a qualitative effect cannot come from a non-qualitative cause. Further, the Self consists of bliss. Cf. *Sūtras*, i. 1. 13, 'The

[1] Op. cit., p. 38.

Self consisting of bliss on account of multiplication,' —a somewhat curious form of expression, which is explained by Rāmānuja to mean that the supreme bliss is arrived at by multiplying inferior stages of bliss by one hundred. It is declared in the following Sūtra that this bliss cannot possibly be the predicate of the individual self because of the idea of abundance which is associated. Then the Sūtras go on to ascribe other predicates to Brahman—e.g. 'ether is Brahman,' ether of course being taken in a subtle and spiritual sense. Similarly light and other qualities are first spiritualized and then applied to the highest Brahman. Rāmānuja thus summarizes the combined argument of the opening Sūtras: 'To those who maintain that the object of inquiry is a substance devoid of all difference neither the first nor the second Sūtra can be acceptable; for the Brahman, the inquiry into which the first Sūtra proposes, is something of supreme greatness; and, according to the second Sūtra, it is the cause of the origin, subsistence, and final destruction of the world. The same remark holds good with regard to all following Sūtras and the scriptural texts on which they are based—none of them confirm the theory of a substance devoid of all differences.' [1] More positively he says, in his introduction to the Second Adhyāya: 'The first Adhyāya has established the truth that what the Vedānta texts teach is a supreme Brahman, which is something different as well from non-sentient matter as from intelligent souls, whether connected with or separated from matter, which is free from even a shadow of an imperfection of any kind; which is an ocean, as it were, of auspicious qualities, and so on, which is the sole cause of the entire universe, which constitutes the inner self of all things.'

[1] Rāmānuja's *Commentary*, 1. 2.

Rāmānuja seems also inclined to add the general consideration that these Sūtras could not possibly have regarded Brahman as anything else than qualitative. To have taken another point of view would have been, at the very outset, to render all discussion futile, for discussion of any kind and every form of evidence in support of an argument must deal with some definite subject. As Mādhava later said (*Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha*, p. 74), 'There can be no evidence of an undetermined reality.'

Śaṅkara would meet this general consideration by pointing out that it is far from being the case that definite knowledge is the only possible knowledge; on the contrary, the definite knowledge is untrustworthy by its very limitations. The *saguṇa* aspect of Brahman is essentially limited, made up of references to objects in time and space. The *saguṇa* aspect, therefore, can represent only a transitory phase of the divine nature and the full truth must escape it. The *nirguṇa* aspect must be taken as higher than and inclusive of the *saguṇa* aspect.

Following out this line of thought, Śaṅkara meets Rāmānuja's interpretation of the first book of the Sūtras, not so much by challenging the interpretation of each individual Sūtra as by asserting, on the strength of his (Śaṅkara's) general position, that the highest Brahman is not referred to in these introductory Sūtras. The reference may be to a non-intelligent principle such as we have in the Sankhya philosophy; but, whether this is so or not, in any case the reference never rises higher than to Īśvara, and we have no reason to identify Īśvara with the ultimate Being.

Now it is of course obvious that the reference in the introductory Sūtras is not to Brahman *as conceived by Śaṅkara*, but they may quite possibly refer

to the highest Brahman as conceived by the writer of the Sūtras. And it is, on the face of it, unlikely that this writer, in deliberate pursuance of the aim announced in the first Sūtra, viz. the inquiry into Brahman, should begin, and continue at considerable length, a description which is not a description of Brahman at all, but of a lower deity. Therefore it seems necessary to conclude that Rāmānuja is, on the whole, correct in his interpretation of the Sūtras on this point. Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan is right in saying that 'when the author of the Sūtras speaks of the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the world as a Being of infinite knowledge, power, and goodness, he does not give so much as a hint that he says all this only from the popular or *vyāvahārika* point of view.'

Whether Rāmānuja is equally correct in his interpretation of the Upanishad texts bearing on this point is another matter. Barth, in his *Religions of India*, p. 75, takes up the position that 'the notion of a personal God distinct both from the world which He governs and from the Absolute is a notion not unfamiliar to the ancient Upanishads, but foreign to passages purely Vedantic.' If, by 'passages purely Vedantic,' Barth means passages within the Upanishads themselves, only somewhat later than the others to which he also refers, then his opinion is pretty much the same as Śaṅkara's. The latter admits the existence of passages in the Vedānta referring to a qualitative Brahman, but argues that these passages are subsequently contradicted by other passages which, just for the reason that, as a rule, contradiction comes later than that which is contradicted, must be regarded as expressing the final view of the Upanishads. The man of straw must first be set up before he can be knocked

[1] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 158.

down. So the passages which are earlier, i.e. the passages referring to the qualitative Brahman, represent the man of straw. To the earlier group of passages would belong *Muṇḍaka*, i. 1. 9: 'From him who perceives all and knows all, whose brooding consists of knowledge, from him (the highest Brahman) is born *Hiraṇyagarbha*, name, form and matter.' We note the same tendency in *Śvetāśvatara*, vi. 8: 'His high power is revealed as manifold, as inherent, acting as force and knowledge.' In *Chhāndogya*, viii. 1. 5 Brahman is described as having his wishes true, his imagination true. Passages of opposite tendency are found in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iii. 4. 2: 'Thou couldst not see the true seer of sight, thou couldst not hear the true hearer of hearing, nor perceive the perceiver of perception, nor know the knower of knowledge'; and, again, in *Kena*, ii. 5, 'By whom it is not thought, by him it is thought; by whom it is thought, he does not know it; unknown by those who know it, it is known by those who do not know it,' we gain the impression of a being entirely abstract, to whom the ordinary categories of thought are inapplicable. The contradictions between such groups of passages is solved by the opponents of Rāmānuja in the following light-hearted way: 'There being a conflict between the two sets of passages, we, according to the mimansa principle referred to above, decide that the texts referring to Brahman as devoid of qualities are of greater force, because they are later in order than those which speak of Brahman as having qualities. Thus everything is settled.'

The confidence thus expressed may be fully justified, but the reason given is somewhat insecure. We cannot rely very much upon the mere order of the passages. In one of the Upanishads which have been quoted from we have the passage: 'That

which cannot be seen nor seized, which has no family and no caste, no eyes nor ears, no hands nor feet, the eternal, omnipresent, infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which we regard as the source of all beings.' The *main* emphasis of this passage is in the negative direction, and yet it *precedes* a passage which has been quoted in favour of the qualitative character of Brahman.

But, however little value we may attach to the particular form of Śaṅkara's argument, we must admit that his contention is in the main justified. The Upanishads do not indeed make any formal or explicit distinction between the non-qualitative and the qualitative Brahman, i.e. between Brahman and Īśvara. Indeed in the quotation just given from the *Muṇḍaka* (I. 1, 9), we have evidence of the two views existing side by side in the same verse. Cf. also *Śvetāśvatara*, vi. 11: 'The one only divine Being is hidden in all things; he is omnipresent, and the inner self of all creatures; he guides all actions and lives in all things, he is the witness and the animator; he is detached from the world and he is without the *guṇas*.' In the pairs of predicates to which we have already referred, we have evidence not only of inability to describe the highest Brahman, but also of the presence side by side of the two different points of view. Nevertheless, although there is no explicit declaration, when we remember the constantly negative tendency of the Upanishads, the distrust of ordinary experience, the disinclination to apply any objective predicates whatsoever to the subject, and the almost complete vagueness of the predicates which are unwillingly applied, we must admit that Śaṅkara is right and that the Upanishads favour, on the whole, the doctrine of a Brahman of abstract character. The main ten-

[1] *Commentary*, i. 1. 6.

dency of their teaching is not represented faithfully by the personal Īśvara of Rāmānuja, and his theistic conclusions, with their implications, are not true deductions.

We now turn to the closely allied question of *the relation of God to the world.* It is obvious that, if Brahman is qualitative, then we are justified in finding in him the germs of all existence and the metaphysical justification of the world in which we live. He is a self with hidden powers, and the world is just a manifestation of these powers. On the other hand, if he is non-qualitative, then he does not furnish a natural explanation of the problem of the world. We have to introduce another problem—the problem of *māyā*, and the question comes to be, How is this principle to be interpreted ? Is it to be regarded as a principle of illusion merely, making necessary an interpretation of the world as also an illusion ? It is here we reach the centre of the problem stated at the beginning of this chapter. Śaṅkara takes the negative view of *māyā*, regarding it as a principle of illusion. *Māyā* has indeed enough of positive character to give rise to a phenomenal world, but the illusory character must be carefully emphasized. Further, this illusion is not subjective only, it does not consist merely in our ignorance. It is also an objective principle of illusion—if the phrase may be allowed without obvious contradiction—and it is to be applied not only to the details of the world but to the world as a whole. Even such a personal Being as Rāmānuja believes in, is to be regarded as the first product of *māyā*. There is illusion at the root of things, giving fictitiousness to everything which is not the pure unity of Brahman. Rāmānuja, on the other hand, holds to the belief in a real, constructive world

principle, evolving the world out of the hidden powers of Brahman. And the world is related to Brahman as the body to the soul, or is bound to him in the close relation of effect to cause.

One of the influences which led to the extreme position of Śaṅkara was a growing realization of the requirements of the doctrine of abstract unity. In times of less clear philosophical thinking it might have been possible to hold the conceptions of unity and difference side by side, without concerning oneself very much about the exact relation. But gradually it became apparent that such elasticity or oscillation was destructive of system building, and at the same time, seeing that the prevalent conception of what was meant by unity was that of an abstract unity exclusive of differences, a definite alternative had to be faced. Either the unity had to be sacrificed to the plurality or the plurality to the unity. Śaṅkara chose the latter course and kept to it unswervingly—*except* in times of very great need.

Another influence which helped Śaṅkara to reach and maintain his position was that of Buddhism. He, indeed, strenuously opposes the Buddhist sensationalism, but the effort after release by means of thought and the belief in the power of thought to annihilate ordinarily accepted reality, which are characteristic of Buddhism, could not fail to encourage him in his particular interpretation of Vedānta teaching. If knowledge is to have the power attributed to it, then the world must be of such a character as to be destroyable by knowledge.

We should notice that Śaṅkara's central principle makes it peculiarly difficult to arrive at any solution of the problem we are discussing, viz. the adequacy of his interpretation of the Vedānta Sūtras and of the Upanishads. Ostensibly he tries to support his

theory by reference to the sacred text, but if he meets with difficulties in the authorities, he has a quick solution for these difficulties. He has only to say that if the apparent tendency of the texts is towards the establishment of a real world, they can be speaking only of a *supposed reality* which is itself a product of *māyā*. The contrary arguments are allowed no weight because both they and the persons who use them may be condemned on the ground of *ignoratio elenchi*. Śaṅkara begs the question by assuming that any descriptions of objects must, just because they are descriptions, be descriptions of objects which do not really exist, and he goes on to point out that it is useless to discuss what does not really exist as if it had any bearing upon the central problem, viz. the nature of Brahman. Thus Śaṅkara's begging of the question enables him to assume that those who differ from him cannot possibly be discussing anything which is not the product of *māyā*, and that therefore their arguments need not be seriously considered. It is only when he forgets his fundamental assumption—and it must be admitted that he frequently does so—it is only then that his search after the teaching of his authorities can be admitted to be thoroughly genuine.

Now, if there is a process by which a disputant may be driven out of court as soon as his arguments become disconcerting, his point of view is hardly likely to receive the amount of attention it might otherwise deserve. We are sometimes inclined to think that Śaṅkara dismisses difficulties by means of the argument that in an illusory world the difficulties must be illusory also. Frequently we find him maintaining his doctrines against a still more unsatisfactory view, and then, when these doctrines are found to contain difficulties within

themselves, they are abandoned on the ground that they belong to an illusory world. Thus e.g. in his commentary on ii. 1. 9, he seems to argue against the Śankhya philosophy in favour of Brahman as a material cause, but when difficulties are brought forward relating to this later position, he takes refuge in *māyā*. His idea seems roughly to be that the world is certainly not produced by any other cause than Brahman, but as a matter of fact it is not really produced at all. Again, in the *Commentary*, iii. 2. 3, as we shall see more fully a little later, in arguing against the doctrine of sensationalism and subjective illusion, he emphasizes the reality of ordinary experience as against that of dreams; but when he comes to deal directly with this ordinary experience, we find that it also, as a whole, is sublated by reality and consigned to the category of dreams.

In justice, however, to Śaṅkara, it must be admitted that he is fully aware of this double point of view, and not in the least ashamed of it. His position is stated thus: 'The entire complex of the phenomenal existence is considered as true, as long as the knowledge of Brahman as the cause of all has not arisen, just as the phantoms of a dream are considered to be true until the sleeper awakens. . . . Hence, as long as true knowledge does not present itself, there is no reason why the ordinary course of secular and religious activity should not hold on undisturbed.' This is no doubt honest, but it does not carry conviction. It is a rule of logic that a hypothesis which continually shifts its ground fails to serve the true purpose of a hypothesis. A further requirement of a good hypothesis is that it should explain the facts as a whole and should not have to be abandoned in the face of certain difficulties in order that it may reserve its strength for

dealing with other perhaps more serious difficulties. But the hypothesis of *māyā* is thus, occasionally, left behind by Śaṅkara.

Holding firmly to the abstract principle of identity, and becoming indeed somewhat obsessed by it, Śaṅkara asserts that the idea of pure being excludes all qualification and all plurality. His movement of thought appears to be logically as follows. 'If A is A it cannot be B.' Driven to choose between unmeaning tautology and a surrender of strict identity, he prefers to run the risk of the former. Creation is impossible. If it appears to be possible, it is a creation of names and forms only—an illusion, and even such an illusory creation is not a product of the highest Brahman, but only of the lower, who is already touched by the world principle of illusion, viz. *māyā*. As has been already pointed out, we must consider *māyā* in both an objective sense, i.e. as the source of the objective world in regard to which we ignorant creatures subjectively entertain illusions, and as the source of these very illusions themselves. Śaṅkara does not stop to consider how *māyā* can have the same characteristics in both its objective and subjective uses—how it can at one and the same time be a world principle producing an actual effect, viz. illusion, and also the illusion itself. It either produces the illusion or it does not. If it does not, then there is nothing to be explained. But if it does produce the illusion, then the destruction of the contents of the illusion by no means destroys the fact that it was produced or diminishes the reality of the producing cause. And yet Śaṅkara imagines that he has secured this result. In other words, in calling two different things by the same name, he fondly imagines that the destruction of one of them may be made to involve the destruction of the other.

But, whatever the faults of his argument, his strictly negative position is obvious.[1] He holds to the doctrine of one undifferenced substance and the falsity of the universe of things, salvation being regarded as the recognition of this falsity and the acknowledgment of the reabsorption of plurality in unity.

Illustrations of Śaṅkara's strict doctrine of *māyā* may be found in his *Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras* (i. 1. 4). He finds himself face to face with the difficulty of maintaining that God is at one and the same time the material cause of the world and that true knowledge of Him delivers us from the bondage of the world. If God is the cause of the world, the effect will partake of the reality of the cause, and consequently deliverance from the world cannot be obtained by a mere act or process of thought. Śaṅkara is driven to explain that God has never really produced a world at all, but that this whole world is an illusion which may be dispelled by a true knowledge of Brahman. If the opponents of Śaṅkara are then disposed to reply that a man, 'even after having heard about Brahman, continues to belong to this transmigratory world,'[2] Śaṅkara meets them at this point by declaring that a man may *appear* still to belong to this transmigratory world, but that it is appearance *merely*, for there is in reality no transmigratory world to which he may belong.

Much the same question is raised in the discussion on ii. 1. 8. Here Śaṅkara is replying to certain objections which could be brought against the doctrine of reabsorption, especially if Brahman is to be regarded as the material cause of the world. The objection is that the effect, being characterized

[1] Cf. S. N. Tattvabhushan, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 134.
[2] *Vedānta Sūtras*, i. 1. 4.

by impurity, will 'inquinate' the cause, or affect the purity of the cause, and that this difficulty is not avoided by saying that the world may remain distinct at the time of reabsorption. Śaṅkara brings forward certain minor arguments upon, as it were, the same level as his opponents. He shows that, if 'inquination' takes place at all, it will take place at all times, and therefore the objection does not lie specially against the process of absorption. Further, he argues that an effect does not necessarily affect the cause with its peculiar characteristics. The vessels into which clay is formed may be resolved again into the original element without affecting that element. But these considerations serve only as a foil to his main argument. He holds that the only really satisfactory way of meeting the objection is to declare that there is really no effect at all. The effect and all its qualities are 'mere fallacious superimpositions of nescience.' And Śaṅkara goes on to say: 'As the magician is not at any time affected by the magical illusion produced by himself, because it is unreal, so the highest self is not affected by the world illusion. And as one dreaming person is not affected by the illusory visions of his dreams, because they do not accompany the waking state and the state of dreamless sleep, so the one permanent witness of the three states (viz. the highest self which is the one unchanging witness of the creation, subsistence, and reabsorption of the world) is not touched by the mutually exclusive three states.'[1]

[1] *Vedānta Sutras*, i. 1. 9.

CHAPTER VII

THE AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETATION (*continued*)

Śaṅkara does not make any very direct appeal to the text of the Vedānta Sūtras in support of his doctrine of *māyā*, the uncompromising character of which we have just been considering. In this avoidance he is probably wise, for the Sūtras do not support his conclusions very fully. They are in closer agreement with Rāmānuja's doctrine of the relation of God to the world, which is that God is the material cause of the world and that finite things have the reality of determinations of His essence. Direct support for this teaching may be found in Sūtras i. 1. 2.: 'Brahman is that from which the origin, &c. (i.e. origin, subsistence, and dissolution) of this world proceed.' There is no hint whatever that the process is one of illusion only. Again, in i. 4. 23 we read, 'Brahman is the material cause also,' which even Śaṅkara interprets as meaning that 'Brahman is to be acknowledged as the material cause as well as the operative cause.' The plain meaning of these words can be departed from only by arguing that the Brahman referred to is not the highest Brahman, and that therefore everything that proceeds from the lower Brahman is already touched with *māyā*. This is, of course, Śaṅkara's method of argumentation, but we have already seen reason to be somewhat suspicious of this method. The idea of Brahman as material cause is repeated in i. 4. 25: 'On account of

both the origin and the dissolution of the world, being directly declared to have Brahman for their material cause'; and the Sūtra next following is even more explicit: 'Brahman is the material cause on account of the Self making itself, which is possible owing to modification' (i. 1. 26). The teaching of this group of passages is primarily directed against the atheistical Sāṅkhya doctrine of a non-intelligent material cause, separate from Brahman, and the argument is that the material cause is gathered up in Brahman himself. Now the teaching of the Sāṅkhya system is that the material world may have to be left behind as an unresolved unmanageable entity, but not that the material world is an illusion. This realistic character of the world is not altered by the discovery that its material cause lies in God. Consequently the consideration of the immediate occasion of this group of passages rather strengthens the interpretation which we have put upon them in regarding them as evidences for the real character of the world process. Rāmānuja thus sums up the teaching of the first *pāda* of the Sūtras: 'The text "that from which these creatures are born" conveys the idea of the highest Brahman as that being which, in sport, as it were, creates, sustains, and finally reabsorbs this entire universe, comprising within itself infinite numbers of variously constituted animated beings—moving and non-moving—of objects of enjoyment for those beings, of means of enjoyment, and abodes of enjoyment, and which is the sole cause of all bliss.'[1]

A passage which has given rise to a considerable amount of discussion and which bears directly on the point at issue is iii. 2. 3. This is translated by Śaṅkara as follows: 'But it [viz. the dream world] is mere illusion on account of its nature not mani-

[1] Rāmānuja's *Commentary*, Introduction to 2nd *pada*.

festing itself with the totality of reality.' In Rāmānuja's *Commentary* a slightly different translation is indicated: 'But it is mere illusion on account of the true nature [of the soul] being fully necessary.' The interpretation of Rāmānuja is that the *creation* of such wonderful things as appear in dreams is 'possible only for the Supreme Person, who can immediately realize all his wishes, but not for the individual soul.' The meaning of this is simply that the individual cannot establish his dream creations in connection with the world of ordinary reality—he cannot give them body in waking life. This meaning is very similar, after all, to the meaning assigned to the passage by Śaṅkara. According to him the environments of the dreaming soul are *māyā*, and, as such, are to be distinguished from the objects of waking consciousness. He is most explicit on this point, and says, in his comment of the Sūtra: 'It is not true that the world of dreams is real: it is mere illusion, and there is not a particle of reality in it. Why? "On account of its nature not manifesting itself with the totality," i.e. because the nature of the dream-world does not manifest itself with the "totality." What, then, do you mean by the "totality"? *The fulfilment of the conditions of place, time, and cause*, and the circumstance of non-refutation.'

Our chief reason for referring to the discussion on this passage is to show that in the above quotation, and especially in the words italicized, Śaṅkara's argument lands him in a position inconsistent with his main doctrine of *māyā*. For, if the objects of the dreaming consciousness are *māyā* and are, as such, to be distinguished from the objects of the waking consciousness, it follows that the latter are not *māyā*, and that the ordinary world which they constitute cannot be regarded as illusory.

Rāmānuja adds certain general arguments which serve to show the impossibility of Śaṅkara's position. Rāmānuja appeals to the immediate deliverances of consciousness, and also to the implications of perception and inference. Cf.: 'If through perception we did not apprehend difference, why should a man searching for a horse not be content with finding a buffalo?'[1] Our very use of language, again, proves that we are in relation to a real world of plurality. Consciousness is essentially relative to a variety of objects, 'Nor is there any consciousness devoid of objects, for nothing of the kind is ever known.' So far is it from being the case that consciousness is incapable of change, that change might be said to be the prevailing characteristic of consciousness.

The doctrine of nescience Rāmānuja holds to be an unproved assumption. It is neither a positive entity nor is it capable of becoming a constitutive principle of the world. It is an abstraction, hypostatizing, or corresponding dimly to, the absence of knowledge, the phrase here indicating absence of knowledge of a real world. Finally, the doctrine of nescience is inconsistent with the position already taken up by Śaṅkara as to the non-qualitative character of Brahman. Cf.: 'When you maintain that Brahman, whose nature is homogeneous intelligence, is invested and hidden by nescience, you assert the destruction of Brahman's essential nature.[2] And again: 'How can there be absence of illumination of the nature of that whose very nature consists in self-illumination?' (p. 111).

We have already implicitly discussed the question whether Rāmānuja represents the teaching of the

[1] Dr. Thibaut's translation of Rāmānuja's *Commentary*, p. 44.
[2] Thibaut's Translation, p. 105.

Upanishads as faithfully as he does that of the Vedānta Sūtras. In the beginning of Chapter IV we showed the negative character of Upanishad teaching, and adduced many texts in support of this negative character, as e.g. *Māṇḍūkya*, iii. 48 : 'This is the highest saving knowledge, that there is nowhere any becoming.' In Chapter V we saw that there were certain modifications in the direction of naturalistic Pantheism which had to be taken account of, modifications which would support Rāmānuja's position rather than Śaṅkara's.

There are many passages which would support Śaṅkara's contention that the whole world is as unreal as is the snake for which a piece of rope has been mistaken. In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* we come across such passages as these : 'There is no intermission in the sight of the self that sees, and its vision is one that passes not away, and there is nothing second to that and apart from that, that it should see' ; and again, in ii. 14, 15 : 'Where in waking or in dreaming there is, as it were, something else.' This latter sentence seems to be equivalent to 'there seems to be something else,' i.e. the something else is an illusory appearance only. In the *Kaṭha Upanishad* we have the distinction made between the 'path of illusion' and the 'path of knowledge,' and the 'path of illusion' is, of course, that which leads to the finite world (cf. *Kaṭha*, i. 3). In the same Upanishad (iv. 10), we have it declared that 'from death to death goes he who perceives therein any diversity.' In *Chhāndogya*, vi. 16 there is evidence of a tendency to call the man false-minded who believes in the reality of the phenomenal world.

The fundamental type of passage for the support of Rāmānuja is to be found in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, iii. 7 : 'He who dwells in the earth, whose body the earth

is, and who rules the earth within, he is thyself, the ruler within the immortal.' We get a categorical statement of pantheistic identity in *Chhāndogya*, ii. 14. 1, 'All this is Brahman,' and emphasis on immanence is given with reference to water, fire, air, and sky. There are innumerable texts treating of the evolution of a world, of real characters out of the fundamental unity. Cf. *Chhāndogya*, vi. 2. 3 : 'It thought, May I be many, may I grow forth, and it sent forth fire,' etc. And again, cf. vi. 8. 4 : 'All these creatures have their root in the Sat, they dwell in the Sat [true], they rest in the Sat'; and vi. 8. 7 : 'All this has that for the Self, it is the True, it is the Self.' In these verses there is indeed the denial of the existence of anything apart from the Self, but there is no suggestion that the Self either excludes or denies the reality of the finite. As Dr. Thibaut says in reference to these passages, 'There is absolutely no reason to assume that the sending forth of elements from the primitive *Sat* is anything else but a real manifestation of powers hidden in the primaeval Self.'[1] In the same section of this Upanishad also we have the metaphor of the salt as a real pervading the real, and in the metaphor of the clay there is no necessary hint of the unreal character of the articles manifested. The favourite metaphor of rivers running into the sea does not involve the unreality of the constituent parts of the sea. In fact, the whole use of metaphors is, as we have seen, a veiled confession at once of the existence of the finite and of failure to resolve it into the Absolute.

Śaṅkara, indeed, attempts to deal with all the points raised in the last paragraph through his doctrine of names and forms. He takes the literal sense of such passages as *Chhāndogya*, vi. 3. 2, 'That

[1] Introduction to Translation of *Commentaries*, cxviii.

Being thought, Let me reveal names and forms,' and viii. 14. 1, 'Let me evolve names and forms,' and *Taittirīya*, ii. 12. 17, 'He, the wise one, who, having divided all forms and given all names.' He presses home the distinction between *vyāvahārika* and *pāramārthika*, and urges that all individualization is merely a concession to our ignorance. If we were only wiser, we should penetrate the illusion and recognize the influence of *māyā* and the truth that all names and forms are the products of nescience. It is an adumbration of the *Logos* doctrine, and puts the doctrine to the same negative use as in Neoplatonism.

Can we say, then, that this *māyā* doctrine represents the teaching of the Upanishads? Gough vehemently defends the primitive character of the doctrine, and in this he would seem to be supported by Hunt and Deussen. The other view, which is supported by Colebrooke, Cowell, Barnett, and others, is that the doctrine of *māyā* is a late accretion and is not found earlier than the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*.

It would probably be admitted by the upholders of the *māyā* theory, that the doctrine appears in its explicit form only in the later Upanishads, but, at the same time, it would be argued that the doctrine is implicitly present from the beginning. Hunt, e.g., says: 'The mystical knowledge of God whereby we become one with Him is said by some to be a later introduction into Brahminism, but it seems to be as old as the oldest philosophies and makes an essential part of them all. The ever-repeated doctrine continually meets us: that so far as we exist we are Brahman, and so far as we are not Brahman our existence is only apparent.'[1] Deussen takes up much the same position. On

[1] *Pantheism*, p. 18.

page 4 of his *Philosophy of the Upanishads* he says: 'It is clear that the view which later was most explicitly set forth in the doctrine of *māyā* is so far from being strange to the oldest Upanishads that it is assumed in and with their fundamental doctrine of the sole reality of the Ātman and forms its necessary complement.' In his *Sechsig Upanishads*, p. 289, he further points out that, while we have in the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* the first appearance of the explanation of the world as a piece of illusion wrought by Brahman as a magician, yet even in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka* and *Kaṭha* Upanishads we have the assertion of the nothingness of the manifold.

It is certain that in the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* the abstract tendency is more marked than in the earlier Upanishads. Cf. especially iv. 10: 'Know then that nature is *māyā*, and the great Lord the *Māyin*.' At the same time it is hardly possible for Gough and his followers to claim even this Upanishad as altogether decisive. In the 6th *Adhyāya* the conception of God as immanent in a positively pantheistic manner is decidedly prominent. The work of God is described as an unfolding and a refolding, and there is no suggestion that the world is unreal. Cf. vi. 3: 'What he has wrought, takes he back again unto himself, coming to unity with the Being of beings'; and again (vi. 11), while Brahman is described as abstract and 'free from all qualities,' he is in the same verse described as the 'one God, hidden in all beings, transfusing everything, the inner soul of all, watching over, dwelling in all things.'

But, whatever may be said about the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, we find a considerable body of opinion to the effect that the passages we have quoted from other Upanishads in favour of Rāmānuja's position

may be taken as, to a certain extent, typical. Amongst older authorities on Vedantic literature we find Colebrooke saying that 'the notion that the versatile world is an entire illusion and that all that passes to the apprehension of the waking individual is but a phantasy, does not appear to be the doctrine of the text of the Vedānta.' Cowell expresses the same opinion that an actual change of substance, and not merely an illusory transformation, is the doctrine underlying the cosmogonies of the Upanishads. Again, Jacobs says: 'The writers of the older Upanishads, i.e. the Vedantists of the old school, were undoubtedly *pariṇāmavādins*, or believers in the reality of the world of perception.' [1] Much the same line is taken in more recent publications. Dr. Barnett agrees with Colebrooke as to the non-primitive character of *māyā*, and says: 'The authors of the older Upanishads were still much influenced by the realism of the Vedas, and it is therefore doubtful whether they could have agreed with the Vedantists who treat the world of experience as absolutely unreal, a mere phantom conjured up by the Self for its own delusion.' [2] Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt gives it as his opinion that '*Māyā* is no part of the original Vedānta philosophy,' and finds no sanction in ancient writers.[3] Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan brings even the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* under the sweep of his assertion: 'It will be seen that, however mysterious a thing creation may be, the writers of the Upanishads all believe in its reality. They indeed never lose sight of the principle that in creation nothing was produced that was apart from Brahman, nothing that constituted a real duality; but that there has been a change

[1] *Manual of Hindu Pantheism*, p. 6.
[2] *Brahma Knowledge*, p. 38.
[3] *Ancient India*, p. 338.

in some sense or other, or, to be more exact, that change in one sense or other is real . . . of this the founders of Hindu Theism seem not to have had the slightest doubt. It is true that the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* calls nature by the significant name of *māyā*; but, except using this much-misunderstood term, the writer of the Upanishad says nothing as to the unreality of nature, but is, throughout his descriptions of creation, as realistic as the writers of the other Upanishads.' [1]

The truth would seem to be that the Upanishads are aiming at a philosophical position which they never quite reach—a middle position which would compel us neither to an entire negation of the world nor to any particularizing assertion of its reality. The outcome of the teaching of the Upanishads would seem to be, not that the world as a whole is the work of a fictitious power, but that if any part of it is viewed out of connection with the whole, any part so viewed must be considered unreal. In other words, our ignorance is to be conceived as merely negative and not positive—it is an absence of light, and not a phantom-producing darkness. We are aiming at a recognition of the foolishness of affirming the existence of the world apart from God, but what we have ultimately in view is not negation but totality. The point of view is well stated by Dr. Thibaut : ' The Upanishads teach emphatically that the world does not owe its existence to any principle independent of the Lord, like the *pradhāna* of the Sānkhya philosophy. They also teach that everything material is inferior in nature, but this does not mean that the world is an illusion, like a coil of rope taken for a snake. . . . The Upanishads do not call upon us to look upon the whole world as an illusion to be destroyed by knowledge. The

[1] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 149.

great error which they admonish us to relinquish is rather that things have a separate individual existence, and are not tied together by the bonds of them all being effects of Brahman or Brahman himself.'[1]

There are certainly many passages in the Upanishads which would support the position just indicated, notably *Bṛihadāranyaka*, i. 4. 7: 'He cannot be seen, for, in part only, when breathing he is breath by name, when thinking he is mind by name, when hearing ear by name, when seeing eye by name. All these are but the names of his acts. And he who worships him as the one or the other does not know him, for he is apart from this. When qualified by one or the other predicate, let men worship him as the Self, for in the Self all these are one. The Self is the footstep of everything, for through it one knows everything.' Again, Gough and others who support the *māyā* theory make a good deal of the clay metaphor. 'As every thing made of clay is known by a single lump of clay, being nothing more than a modification of speech, a change of name, while the clay is the only truth, so—existent was this (Brahman) in the beginning, one only without duality.' It is extremely doubtful, however, whether this passage can be pressed into a proof of the unreality of finite things. It rather only proves their unreality when separated from the whole. Following the guidance of this metaphor, we may say that its teaching is that, if we were to assert that the various pots, &c., are not made of clay, or have no connection with clay, we should be under an illusion. From this consideration, however, it does not follow that when their nature as clay has been fully recognized they have then to be regarded as unreal. Similarly, if finite things are

[1] Introduction to Śaṅkara's *Commentary*, p. cxiv.

viewed as detached from the whole they are unreal, but if their connection with the whole is understood, their reality may still be asserted.

Nevertheless, this was an ideal of unified knowledge and a clearness of statement which the Upanishads never fully reached, and it is doubtful whether we can consider it to be their ultimate position. Of course, we cannot impulsively say that a philosophy does not hold a position just because it has not fully established it; but matters are different when the philosophy has turned away from this position, when, because of the difficulty of occupying the position, it has virtually said that the position need not be occupied at all. And this is just what has happened in the case of the Upanishads. Their writers find insuperable difficulties in connecting their unity with their diversity, and instead of saying that this must still be kept in view as the goal of knowledge, they have recourse to the expedient of denying the finite world altogether and all its difficulties along with it. Thus they reach the position of abstract idealism which seems to be dominant in many parts of the Upanishads and in much subsequent philosophy. This view of the matter fits in with what we have already said regarding the growing emphasis upon the abstract point of view as we move onwards to the later Upanishads. It was only as the controversy grew keener, and as the difficulties of the positively pantheistic point of view became more obvious, that the authors of the Upanishads were led to state the *māyā* doctrine in complete and emphatic form. It became an indispensable doctrine when philosophy had to reconcile the multiplicity of the world with the unity of the first principle. The plurality could not be deduced from the unity, and so the plurality was denied altogether.

It would seem, therefore, that while Śaṅkara's interpretation is contradicted by many portions of the Upanishads, it is on the whole the true interpretation of the ultimate position which had to be taken up in face of the difficulties of reconciling the finite with the infinite. It might also be described as the drawing out of the consequences of the abstract conception of unity with which the Vedānta philosophy deals. It involved probably a failure to keep the eyes fixed on the philosophical ideal of unity in diversity, but this ideal was one which could not be reached except by an entire reconstitution of premises. We cannot help thinking that much of the support which Śaṅkara's type of philosophy obtains is due to non-recognition of the fact that such a philosophy does not represent a persistent striving after an ideal of knowledge, but is rather an implicit confession that the ideal is unattainable. We begin by attaching value to the ideal and then come to attach the same value to the confession of failure in reaching it. Thus a confession of failure masquerades in the guise of a lofty ideal. We have already seen that Deussen holds that the strict view of *māyā* is fundamental in the Upanishads ; but he goes further than this, and holds that such a doctrine is fundamental in all philosophy. Now there may be a certain amount of justification for drawing a parallel between the negative Vedantic theory and the theory of Parmenides, or even that of Plato, but it is surely misleading to suggest that such a parallelism obtains also in reference to the philosophy of Kant. It does not, in short, seem possible to regard the phenomenal and the illusory as having the same philosophical value. The idea of the phenomenal expresses the connection of the details with the whole and their dependence on this whole. The idea of *māyā* expresses rather the

meaninglessness and futility of the whole. Whatever difficulties Kant may have in relating the phenomenal to the noümenal, he never allows that the phenomenal is, in its origin, the outcome of sportive impulse or deliberate deception, or, in its result, a play of meaningless phantoms. A phenomenon which has meaning is one thing and a phenomenon which has no meaning is another. To call the two by the same name is misleading, and our contention is that Śaṅkara's interpretation owes much of its popularity just to this easy confusion. What Deussen speaks of as being assumed in and with the fundamental doctrine of the Ātman is hardly the same as Śaṅkara's doctrine of *māyā*, but probably Śaṅkara is the more logical. For if we start with an abstract featureless unity, we can hardly speak of this as manifesting itself in phenomena. We can only say that it is a *mistake* to think that it manifests itself at all.

We might carry the criticism further, and point out that the strict *māyā* theory has no right even to the word 'illusion.' It ought to be content with the word 'hallucination'—a word of lesser respectability from the empirical point of view—and it ought to adjust itself to the lesser amount of security which is all that this more accurate word can indicate. A reference to the stock illustration will make this clear. A rope is mistaken for a snake, and when true knowledge comes the mistake is discovered. This is rightly called an illusion, but does it properly illustrate the doctrine of the unreality of all finite things? We submit that it does not. The rope has been wrongly interpreted in being regarded as a snake, but even when the mistake has been recognized the rope is still there as an existent thing. The theory, therefore, cannot use this illustration, and still claim to

have swept the finite out of existence. The only consistent illustration of a fully negative theory would be one in which an imaginary snake was seen when there was not even a piece of rope to explain the mistake. In other words, we require an illustration of an hallucination, but are put off with an illustration of an illusion. This little piece of rope which cannot be made to disappear now becomes troublesome, and we begin to realize that it has never been legitimately used. It has been of immense service to the *māyā* philosophy, but it cannot be said to be a lawful possession of this philosophy.

This is, however, a digression which is intended to illustrate the very great facility with which one may pass from the one position to the other, from the position taken up by Rāmānuja to that of Śaṅkara. Our discussion would seem to have had no very definite result. Both forms of Pantheism, i.e. that which asserts the existence of the finite and that which denies it, can find support in the Upanishads. We are inclined, however, to think that Śaṅkara's doctrine must be given the pre-eminence for accuracy of interpretation of the fundamental tendency. It is the refuge when the finite begins to give trouble. Certainly very little else in the way of refuge is provided. In attempting to give reality to the finite little success is obtained. Vedānta writers may protest vigorously against the interpretation of *māyā* as mere illusion. They may speak, e.g., of the emanations of the finite world as a series of veils which are to be withdrawn in order that the true reality may be revealed. But a conception like this simply betrays the negative character of the tendency. Veils are temporary expedients, and suggest the idea that they may be discarded. In this connection, when they are discarded, what would we be left with? The finite

things *are* the veils, so, in the discarding of the veils, the reality of the finite is also sublated. We are left with only an abstract unity.

Even if we allow that the ideal of a systematic cognizable unity has not been forgotten and that the aim is to reach totality rather than negation, we are inclined to think that the totality is emphasized at the expense of its constituents to such an extent that the latter are likely to disappear altogether. They do not stand out with sufficient clearness to enable us to give them a place in an articulated scheme of knowledge. A process of unfolding and infolding, which is all that seems to be reached so long as the authority of the Upanishads themselves is followed, does not give us sufficient 'grip' upon finite reality, and in the subsequent history of Indian philosophy even this slight hold is continually being relaxed.

While this remark may apply to all forms of finite reality, the application of it to the question of the *permanent existence of individual souls* calls for a little further consideration, and to this we may now turn, as to a special case of the general question.

According to Śaṅkara, the individual soul is only a passing phase of Brahman. The goal is release from its experiences as an individual and the consequent merging of it in Brahman. In his commentary on *Sūtras*, iv. 1. 2, Śaṅkara discusses at considerable length the interpretation of the formula 'That art Thou.' 'That' is to be taken as indicating the 'thinking Brahman which is the cause of the origin and so on of the world,' and whose nature is 'the luminousness of intelligence.' 'Thou' is the inward self—the agent in seeing and hearing. The relation which is established by the formula is to be regarded as one of absolute identity, and

this can be realized only if we are 'quick-witted' persons and ready to give up 'the conceit of the self being subject to pain.' We must reach the intuition that 'My self is pure intelligence, free from all pain.' This intuition can be reached only by the highest knowledge, and in fact constitutes the highest knowledge. In his discussion of iv. 2. 7, again, Śaṅkara argues that immortality is relative only, and belongs to him only who is 'without having burned,' i.e. who has not burned 'nescience and the other afflictions.' He who possesses true knowledge cannot be born again. He has entirely put off individuality. Śaṅkara carries out the spirit of the old Vedic text, 'In the beginning there was but one, and there will be but one in the end.' *Vedānta Sūtra*, i. 1. 19 runs as follows: 'The Scripture teaches the joining of this [i.e. the individual soul] with that [i.e. the Self consisting of bliss] on that being fully known [i.e. in the *ānandamaya* state].' Śaṅkara takes it for granted that the 'joining' can mean only identity, and he comments as follows: 'If he sees in the Self consisting of bliss even a small difference in the form of non-identity, then he finds no release from the fear of transmigratory existence. But when he, by means of the cognition of absolute identity, finds absolute rest in the Self consisting of bliss, then he is freed from the fear of transmigratory existence.' In his commentary on i. 4, 22 he also states explicitly the doctrine of identity. 'When the connection [i.e. with the body and the senses] has been solved, specific cognition, which depended on it, no longer takes place. . . . All the adherents of the Vedānta must admit that the differences of the soul and the Highest Self are not real, but due to the limiting adjuncts, viz. the body and so on, which are the product of name and forms, presented by nescience.'

Again, in his commentary on iii. 2. 5, he argues that individuality is due entirely to nescience. The equality of attributes possessed in common by the soul and the Lord 'is hidden by the veil of nescience. . . . Bondage is due to the absence of knowledge of the Lord's true nature; release is due to the presence of such knowledge.'

According to Rāmānuja, on the other hand, the individual soul is real and will at death pass through different stages to the world of Brahman, where it will exist in a state not of identity nor of absorption, but of right attitude and perfect communion. The release which comes from true knowledge is not the destruction of personality, but the destruction of egoity merely. The goal is to preserve our essential dependence on Brahman, but not our absolute identity with him. In regard to *Sūtra*, i. 1. 19, quoted above,[1] Rāmānuja comments vigorously as follows: 'To say that any one is identical with that by obtaining which he enjoys bliss, would be madness indeed.' In his commentary on iv. 1. 2 he sets forth his view under the guidance of the figure of soul and body, and asserts a unity in difference. 'Our view implies a denial of difference in so far as the individual is of the nature of the Self, and it implies an acknowledgment of difference in so far as it allows the highest Self to differ from the individual soul in the same way as the latter differs from the body.' In regard to the point raised in iv. 2. 7, Rāmānuja argues that the immortality there described is common both to him who knows and to him who does not know, i.e. perfect knowledge does not sublate individual immortality. And the Self which remains is not tainted with nescience. 'Nor does this appearance as an "I" imply in any way that the released Self is subject to

[1] p. 222.

nescience or implicated in the Saṁsāra. . . . The consciousness of the I cannot be the cause of nescience. . . . In agreement with this, we observe that the ṛishi Vāmadeva, in whom the intuition of identity with Brahman had destroyed all nescience, enjoyed the consciousness of the personal "I."'[1] Thus generally, to 'reach Brahman' means that in the act of devout meditation we have an intuitive knowledge of him; it does not mean that we are merged in him.

On the whole, Rāmānuja seems to give a more faithful interpretation of the Vedānta Sūtras on this point than does Śaṅkara; and Max Müller is probably right in saying that 'Śaṅkara's philosophy, with its unflinching monism, is his own rather than Bādarāyana's.'[2] We may compare, in this connection, the interpretation of *Sutra*, ii. 3. 43 (42 in Rāmānuja's *Commentary*) given by Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja respectively. Śaṅkara has to explain away the statement that 'the soul is a part of Brahman' by showing that all that is meant is 'a part, as it were,' and further he selects the metaphor which gives the least independent reality to the soul. The soul is related to the Lord, as the sparks to the fire, and *not* as a servant to a master. Rāmānuja, on the other hand, contends that the phrase 'a part of Brahman' must be taken in its full meaning as expressing at once the unity of the individual soul with Brahman and its non-identity with it. Succeeding Sūtras show that Brahman is unaffected by the experiences of the individual soul, and therefore cannot be identified with these experiences. And in *Sūtra* 33 of the same *pāda* we have the soul described as an agent; which leaves us with an impression of its individuality.

It is doubtful, however, whether the Upanishads

[1] Thibaut's translation, p. 70.
[2] *Six Systems*, p. 117.

support Rāmānuja to the same extent. There are indeed many passages in which it is suggested that the individual soul dwells for ever in a paradise where its individuality is maintained. Cf. *Kaushītaki*, ii. 15, where we read that the enlightened man 'goes to heaven where the gods are, and, having reached this, he who knows this becomes immortal with that immortality which those gods enjoy.' There is here no hint of the destruction of individuality, and the whole of this particular Upanishad is in much the same strain. Neither is there a great deal of force in the argument that the passage deals with a lower class of devotees only.

Still, it must be admitted that Rāmānuja cannot prove that the Upanishads have reached a full conception of what is meant by individuality or have taken up a firm position in regard to it. He cannot withstand the force of such passages as *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, ii. 4, 'When he has departed there is no more knowledge,' or the still stronger passage, 'From death to death goes he who sees any plurality anywhere' (i. 4. 19). Rāmānuja would argue that the latter passage condemns only a denial that the world in its entirety is an effect of Brahman. It does not oppose such plurality on Brahman's part as is implied in his intention to become manifold or in the words, 'May I be many, may I grow forth.' It is doubtful, however, whether such an interpretation would stand as reflecting the prevailing spirit of the Upanishads. There is in them a constant tendency to regard the emergence of Brahman into plurality as a concession merely to the empirical consciousness and not as an assertion of the ultimate position. Even if in certain cases the writers of the Upanishads are disposed to give greater individuality to finite persons, they do so in a way which leaves their abstract Pantheism ultimately

undisturbed. The comparison of the highest state to dreamless sleep is suggestive of the annihilation of personality, and their favourite metaphor to illustrate the merging of souls into Brahman is that of rivers running into the seas, which metaphor, though it does not, when it is analysed, fully illustrate the abstract tendency, is nevertheless intended to do so. And Rāmānuja himself has not reached such a full conception of personality as to enable him to develop thoroughly his countervailing tendency. It seems, therefore, on the whole possible to agree with Dr. Thibaut when he says: 'The prevailing tendency of the Upanishads is that the soul of the self of the sage—whatever its original relation to Brahman may be—is in the end completely merged or indistinguishably lost in the universal Self. . . . The final absolute identification of the individual self with the universal Self is indicated in terms of unmistakable plainness. "He who knows Brahman, becomes Brahman." "He who knows Brahman becomes all this," "as the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man goes to the divine person."'[1] And, contrariwise, it is difficult to agree with writers like Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan that the 'general spirit of the Upanishads and passages of unmistakable import teach the continuance of individuality in the state of final union with Brahman'; or—to take another passage—that 'the individual's union with God is not a union of mere knowledge, but also one of love, reverence, and obedience, such as should exist between two spirits of which the one is infinitely superior to the other.'[2] As we have seen, the argument as regards particular passages supporting individual continuance is pro-

[1] Introduction to Śaṅkara's *Commentary*, p. cxviii.
[2] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 14.

bably stronger than the argument as regards general import, but the interpretation of even these particular passages is by no means unambiguous. Pundit Tattvabhushan, e.g., quotes the words ' freed from the fetters of the heart, he becomes immortal,' as if they proved individual immortality ; but the whole question depends on whether, for a rigid interpretation, we should lay the emphasis upon *he* or upon *immortal*, and such a point could be decided only by reference to prevailing tendencies.

Rāmānuja would have been much more successful in establishing his views if he had been able to abolish the distinction between *higher and lower knowledge*, which has been already referred to, or at least if he had been able to show that the distinction was Śaṅkara's own and was not derivable from either the Vedānta Sūtras or the Upanishads. We have already pointed out how fond Śaṅkara was of this distinction, and how his use of it enabled him to evade the difficulties which his abstract theories had created. If, however, he can point out that he has warrant for this distinction in the Vedānta Sūtras or the Upanishads, then, in order to interpret these, we must accept the decision of the higher knowledge as final and as simply negating the results of the lower knowledge. This latter, again, would have to be viewed as a temporary concession to the empirical point of view. If, on the other hand, the distinction is invalid, then contradictory theories must be examined on their merits, and neither of two opposing doctrines is liable to the indignity of being thrust out of court without a hearing. So the matter is of some importance, and unless Rāmānuja can abolish the distinction, he has no means of meeting the objection that, however reasonable his interpretations are in

themselves, they are reasonable only from a point of view which must be transcended, and, however literal they may be, they are literal only with reference to statements which were never meant to be taken as containing ultimate truth.

How, then, does the matter stand? Is Śaṅkara's view of the distinction between higher and lower knowledge justified, or is Rāmānuja right in holding that knowledge is ultimately one, and that, if a statement is definitely made and reasonably upheld, it is not liable to be overturned by a complete change of the point of view? Probably all that need be said is that Śaṅkara seems to be able to draw very little support for his doctrines from the Sūtras. In the fourth division of the Sūtras a long description is given of the final condition of one who knows Brahman. Śaṅkara maintains that this is a description of one who has only the lower kind of knowledge of Brahman. But the description takes up so large a part of this division of the Sūtras and is of so elevated a character as to make it almost impossible for us to believe that it refers only to one who is still destitute of the highest possible knowledge of Brahman, or—to use Śaṅkara's language—'takes his stand on symbols.'

As to the teaching of the Upanishads on this point we have already referred to what might seem to be a distinction between the two kinds of knowledge in our discussion of the relation between knowledge and works as set forth in *Īśā*, i. 9: 'All who worship what is not real knowledge enter into blank darkness. Those who delight in real knowledge enter, as it were, into greater darkness.' Śaṅkara argues that the real knowledge referred to is not the highest kind of knowledge—it is only knowledge of the Vedas or of the gods, and is not the knowledge of the highest Brahman. But, to

insist upon a distinction of the two kinds of knowledge in connection with this passage would be to detach it from the main line of argument, which is that a combination of works and knowledge is the safer method, and that if *either* knowledge *or* works is chosen, the alternative of knowledge alone is more dangerous than the alternative of works alone. Speaking generally, it may be said that the distinction between a higher and a lower knowledge of Brahman is not made in the Upanishads, though it is implied in the diverse accounts given both of the nature of Brahman and of his relation to the world, and also in the abrupt turning away from ordinary experience which is often commended. Though the question of this distinction is of some importance, its importance is not of the highest kind, and the question does not seem ultimately to demand separate treatment. For, after all, the denial of the validity of conclusions reached on the empirical level is simply a method—and not a very bold method—of saying that the conclusions in question are not regarded as ultimately satisfactory. Instead, however, of attempting to deal directly with the difficulties which these empirical conclusions leave unsolved, they are simply set aside by means of a contemptuous reference to the level on which they arise. Contrariwise, the only effective means of abolishing the distinction between the two orders of knowledge would be to strengthen and widen the scope of the conclusions reached from the ordinary point of view. If these conclusions were felt to be more satisfactory, there would be no attempt to escape into the realm of the so-called 'higher knowledge.'

So we are really back again at the question whether the attempt to establish the real and at the same time the dependent existence of the finite world

and individual souls is felt by the Upanishad writers themselves to have succeeded. We are inclined to answer this question in the negative, and to say that they were never able to accept the position afterwards taken by Rāmānuja as a final one. On the contrary, they were continually tempted to escape from the difficulties of a finite and concrete world into the region of abstractions: *Māyā*, Illusion, Nescience, and the undifferenced Absolute.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PANTHEISM AND PESSIMISM OF THE VEDĀNTA

As a result of our consideration of the teaching of the Upanishads and their main interpretations, how are we to characterize the system as a whole, so far as it can be called a system? In particular, are we justified in applying to it the name of *Pantheism* and thus bringing it under our present inquiry into the effects of Pantheism upon our sense of life values? We shall attempt to answer this question in the first part of this chapter, and shall then go on to the further question whether the effect in this particular instance is to be regarded as optimistic or pessimistic.

No one will, of course, attempt to prove that there is nothing but Pantheism in the Vedānta, but it may be possible to show that the non-pantheistic elements are by no means dominant, and that such elements are for the most part confined to the interpretations of the Upanishads, and do not appear in the Upanishads themselves to any great extent.

It is obvious that there is in the Upanishads a constant tendency to regard God as the sole reality, and the chief difficulty is felt to centre round the problem, not whether *All is God*, but whether *God is All*. In other words, the question whether anything exists apart from God is regarded as superfluous, and the whole difficulty is to determine what *exists*. The identity of God and the world is

asserted over and over again in unmistakable terms. The main differences of opinion emerge when we consider whether emphasis is to be laid on the world or God. We have discovered two tendencies in the course of our investigation—a negative and a positive tendency—which bear a close resemblance to the two phases of Pantheism referred to in an introductory chapter. Both tendencies, as we have seen, are to be found in the Upanishads. In the Vedānta Sūtras the concrete positive tendency is more prominent, while in the *Commentary* of Śaṅkara the negative tendency reappears, only to be vigorously opposed in the *Commentary* of Rāmānuja.

When we consider that two interpretations of the Vedānta are undoubtedly possible, remember also the exceedingly keen controversy as to whether both phases have a right to the name of Pantheism, and note the presence of elements which go beyond the bounds of strict Pantheism, it does not seem remarkable that writers on the Vedānta have found it difficult to describe the system. Dr. Inge [1] speaks of 'the pan-nihilism of Indian philosophy'—presumably in reference to the Vedānta. Dr. Barnett speaks of 'the utterly blank abstraction of Brahman.'[2] Prof. Macdonell speaks without hesitation of the 'pantheistic Vedānta.' [3] Garbe speaks of 'the philosophy proper of the Upanishads—the pure Pantheism which is destined to assume its ultimate form in the system of the Vedānta.' [4] Deussen, finally, is prepared for anything, and describes the teaching of the Upanishads as presenting a 'very varied colouring of idealistic, pantheistic, or theistic shades without becoming contradictory in the proper sense of the term.'

[1] *English Mystics*, p. 127.
[2] *Brahma Knowledge*, p. 1.
[3] *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 71.
[4] *Philosophy of Vedānta*, p. 71

But before developing further the Pantheism of the positive and negative tendencies which we have so frequently noticed, we may ask whether there are other elements present of a non-pantheistic character. It may be said with confidence that the Upanishads and their interpretations give no countenance to dualism, such as that of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. To whatever extent the system of the Vedānta may be found afterwards to fall apart into dualism, its explicit teaching is an emphatic assertion of unity. The question whether there are *theistic* elements is more difficult to settle. We have a tendency towards such elements in the process of thought by which the neuter Brahmăn takes the masculine form Brahmān, and by a still further determination becomes Īśvara or Parameśwar, functioning as the cosmic causal body. Wherever description of a deity is possible by which he may be constituted an object of worship and the deity is still conceived of as one and as the source of all things, then theism is possible as distinct from Pantheism on the one hand and polytheism on the other. There is a hint of a theistic religious relationship in *Muṇḍaka*, iii. 2. 1, where the idea of worship is emphasized, and the idea of worshipful gazing at an object is alsofound in *Śvetāśvatara*, iv. 7. There are traces of theistic transcendence and independence in such passages as *Īśā*, 8, 'He—a seer, wise, omnipotent, self-existent, he disposed all things rightly for eternal years,' and *Kaṭha*, v. 13 : 'There is one eternal thinker, thinking non-eternal thoughts, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many.' Transcendence also is suggested in what might be called the quantitative relation of Brahman to the universe. It is not the whole being of Brahman which is identified with the universe, but only a part, the proportion of this part to the whole being

variously estimated in different passages of the Upanishads.

Of course even this theistic attitude is possible only in so far as the positive interpretation of the Upanishads is adopted. If, as in Śaṅkara's interpretation, the personal Lord is regarded as only the first product of Nescience, he cannot have that amount of reality which makes theistic religious devotion possible, nor can this religious devotion be called forth by the characterless unity which is the sole reality Śaṅkara leaves to us. So it is only in the interpretation given by Rāmānuja that we find any extensive development of theism, and his characterization of the Supreme Lord, his assertion of the reality of the universe, and his emphasis upon the reality of the individual soul, are all tending in this direction. It may be doubted, however, whether, after all, he reaches a truly theistic position. It seems impossible, as has been already indicated, to establish the idea of transcendence and its correlative idea of creation without a certain amount of emphasis upon human freedom and the self-limitation of the Divine. Creation, as it is usually understood, involves, besides the choice between possibilities, the idea of the difference between the creator and the created. This may not be an ultimate difference, but it is an actual one, and, unless the difference is recognized, it is impossible to get a firm grasp of the idea of creation. Now in the Indian mind there seems to be a rooted objection to the idea of any difference between the cause and the effect, and this objection is not altogether without its influence on Rāmānuja. Perhaps the influence is greater because of the absence of the idea of self-limitation. Creation, in the truly theistic sense, is not simply a transformation or expansion. It is the institution of a definite

body of reality to which at least a relative independence is given. 'Gott ist von der Natur frei,' says Boehme—God detaches Himself from the nature He has made, and commits to nature a certain amount of freedom. But we cannot keep a firm hold on this conception of freedom unless we have also grasped the idea of human freedom. We cannot say that Rāmānuja did grasp this idea, and therefore he is hampered in the development of his thought, and his doctrine of creation hardly reaches the theistic level. It does not succeed in getting free from the influence of emanation theories. Rāmānuja is rightly called an inclusive monist, and the monism is always predominant in his thought. His theism is somewhat weak and colourless. Moreover, it fails to find very much support in the Upanishads themselves, and therefore stands outside the main line of development.

However clearly the attitude of true worship may seem to be indicated in certain portions, there is the constant refrain, sometimes even in the same verse, that the Self who is to be worshipped is the self of the worshipper. He cannot be objectified to the extent that theistic worship demands. We might compare *Kaṭha Upanishad*, ii. 4. 13, 'The wise man perceives Him within the Self,' and regard this as on the way towards identification of the finite and the infinite Self. We are inclined to think that even the ordinary villager whom Mr. Greaves describes in his article in *The East and the West*, April 1911, has much the same idea when he says, 'God is *in* me, *in* you, in every one, and everything,' and that Mr. Greaves's argument for transcendence, drawn from popular emphasis upon the word 'in,' is hardly so strong as he imagines.

Further, the transcendence which is claimed on account of what might be called the reserve of

Brahman in creating the world is very different from the usual meaning of transcendence. This reservation idea gives us quantitative transcendence merely, whereas in the usual meaning of the term qualitative transcendence is implied. We do not, when we use the word, usually think of a quantity of the being of God remaining unused while the rest is poured forth into the world, or, rather, is simply identified with the world. We are thinking more of God as indeed the creator of the world, but as a being distinct from the world and having at least a qualitative difference of function from the world. In the popular form of the idea God is to the world as the Ruler to the ruled. It is not, of course, meant that in theistic doctrine the transcendence of God excludes immanence, but, when we are thinking of the transcendent aspect, we interpret it in the qualitative manner just indicated and not in the quantitative. Yet it is upon this quantitative relation that the claim of the Vedānta to a doctrine of transcendence is most frequently based even by the most devoted adherents of the present day.

On the whole, we may come to the conclusion that the purely theistic elements in the Upanishads are by no means predominant, and that even such as are to be found are tinged with a pantheistic colouring, while the terminology used, though nominally theistic, is not applied in a properly theistic manner. This point will become clearer when we consider the monism and the determinism of the Upanishads. In the meantime, it may be said that, when we are considering general and prevailing tendencies, there can be little objection to the statement that ' each Upanishad inculcates a Pantheism of one sort or another,' or to the statement already quoted from Cowell that ' through all the Upanishads there runs an unmistakable spirit

of Pantheism.' We must admit that whatever is, is Brahman, and that the relation between God and the world is one of identity. We might make this statement even in reference to the greater part of Rāmānuja's teaching. His objection to identification which we previously considered is mainly directed against the absorbing identification of abstract Pantheism, and not against the equation of God and the concrete world which more positive Pantheism advocates. There is, as a rule, no question that, if the universe exists, it is God. The only question is whether the world which seems to exist, really exists, i.e. whether God is to be regarded as homogeneous or heterogeneous.

When we examine the two pantheistic conceptions of monism and determinism, we find good reason to think that they may be applied to the system of the Vedānta in either of its phases. The followers of Śaṅkara have been called idealist monists, and those of Rāmānuja inclusive monists, but they have both been called monists, and their monism is of a stricter kind than is possible to theists. It has sometimes been objected indeed that the positive phase goes so far in the direction of concession to the empirical point of view that it even loses hold upon pantheistic unity. It is suggested that the hierarchies of divine beings which the cosmogonies of the Upanishads allow give the idea of the derivation of the world from a being who does not pass over into the world, but remains one, indivisible, transcendent; and it is further argued that we cannot allow even a temporary independence of God and still continue to call the system pantheistic. We should notice, however, that even according to the most theistically inclined type of Vedāntic interpretation the independence is temporary merely. It is an unfolding and retraction—from the *pralaya*

state, in which there is no difference of name and form, and in which nothing possesses the qualities by which it is usually known, back again, at the end of the *kalpa* and after experience of ordinary existence, to the same state.

Further, throughout the process the independence is extremely partial. There is no idea of placing God on the one side and the world on the other. Matter and souls form the body of the Lord and are modes of Him. If we take the view of Pantheism suggested in the negative part of the definition of Mr. Allanson Picton and say that 'any view of the universe, allowing the existence of anything outside the Divine Unity, denies that God is all, and therefore is obviously not Pantheism,' we cannot, for this reason, exclude the Vedānta. The independence allowed by the Upanishads to finite things is not so great as to interfere with the Pantheism of the system. The spirit running through the whole is that which is expressed in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*—that the world is the being of God, separated from him only as the beams which stream from the sun. The differences allowed by even the Vedāntist of the positive type are differences within a unity. He is never inclined to look upon the creature as a product external to God, but always regards him as a 'finite mode of infinite being.' Rāmānuja even, as we have seen, regards God as related to the world as an all-pervading soul, and he is too much attached to the doctrine of the non-difference of cause and effect to get *very* far away from the pantheistic position.

The impression we have got thus far is strengthened by an examination of the Indian doctrine of creation. The kind of creation which is allowed in the Upanishads is a necessary unfolding of God. If there is wish at all, it is of an exceedingly ele-

mentary kind, and is not to be regarded as a purpose or resolve. We have indeed the words 'Let me be many, let me grow forth'; but immediately, as it were, the active impulse ceases and we are left with merely a natural process of evolution and devolution. The word *sṛishṭi* means a 'discharge, a setting-free, or an emission'—an emergence of the universe from Brahman. It may be taken as a real emergence, but it is not the definite exercise of conscious power; neither, as the *Māṇḍukya Upanishad* tells us, is it due to accident or to a wish of God. Accident is a conception unworthy of the inevitableness of the process, and, as for wish, it is far too anthropomorphic. 'What could he wish for who has everything?' No, if it is creation at all, it is creation in the Spinozistic sense, from which all freedom in the ordinary meaning of the term and all purpose has been excluded, deterministic in its origin, deterministic in its working, binding the individual hard and fast in the chain of circumstances. This idea of creation which we find in the Upanishad is one which entered into Indian thought even in Vedic times. We find that Prajāpati does not create a world, but simply transforms himself and his different members into the different regions of the universe. The idea has not changed its form in the intervening centuries. It is so different, indeed, from what we ordinarily mean by creation that we may prefer to borrow a word from Deussen and call it 'cosmogonism.'

We have seen that there is considerable justification for the view that the positive tendency in the Upanishads represents merely a concession to the ordinary consciousness, and is not to be taken as the ultimate philosophical position. It is frequently pointed out that to represent the universe as an

emergence from Brahman is really in contradiction to the fundamental dogma of the sole reality of Brahman. In view of the contradictions between the two interpretations of the Vedānta it might seem difficult to apply the name Pantheism to both. A grudging permission to use the term Pantheism is given by Deussen. 'The universe is real, and yet the Ātman is the sole reality, for the Ātman is the entire universe. We may describe this theory as pantheistic, although in its origin it is very different from modern Pantheism.' [1] We are content to notice that, though this permission is grudging, yet the doctrine which it allows us to describe as Pantheism is admitted to 'occupy the largest place in the Upanishads.'

Others, however, are more emphatic than Deussen in their refusal of the word 'Pantheism.' Mr. Allanson Picton argues that to suggest Pantheism in connection with the negative aspect of Vedāntic theory is illogical. He points out that, if God is all that is, then there cannot legitimately be any hierarchy of divine beings such as is described in the cosmogony of the Upanishads, and he seems to think that the word 'Pantheism' is thus excluded. Now Mr. Picton's argument may prove the unreality of the cosmogonical systems, but it does not prove right off the unsuitability of applying the word 'Pantheism' to the reality that is left. Mr. Greaves, in the article already quoted from (*The East and the West*, April 1911), comes closer to the point at issue. His statement of the case is as follows: 'To say that the monistic Vedāntism taught by Śaṅkarāchārya is in any sense allied to Pantheism is to contradict the very clearest teaching of the system. The Vedāntist does not say that "all is God," but that "God is all," which is a very different

[1] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 237.

position. His meaning is that *God alone is*, and that of nothing else can it be asserted that it is. The *All* of the pantheist does not exist for the Vedāntist at all: it simply does not really exist. Thus God is not immanent in the universe, for the universe does not exist. . . . This philosophy is clearly not Pantheism. It is Transcendentalism of the most extreme type, and for Transcendentalism there is no place in Pantheism.'

In regard to this argument we may say that it does not seem to matter so much, after all, whether we say that 'All is God' or 'God is All.' In any case, the second position must also be allowed to lay claim to the title of Pantheism. Before we can say that God alone exists we must have some conception at least that we are positing reality. We are asserting that 'nothing which is not God, exists,' which is pretty much the same as to say that whatever is not excluded from existence may be identified with God, i.e.—in language closer to the formula—that All that exists is God. There seems to be no insuperable objection, then, to simple conversion of the propositions—*All is God* and *God is All*. A minor criticism of Mr. Greaves's position is to point out the unsuitability of his use of the word 'transcendental.' In this word there lurks a reference to a universe which is to be transcended, and therefore the word cannot be applied to the Vedānta as interpreted by Mr. Greaves, for, according to him, the essence of the doctrine is that *God alone exists*.

Our contention is that if you are left with only one reality, and are inclined, notwithstanding the vagueness of this reality, to apply to it the name of God, then there can be no objection to calling this system which inculcates the doctrine of the one reality by the name of 'Pantheism.'

It is unnecessary to repeat here the general argu-

ment of our Introduction, Chapter II, in which we saw that historically, psychologically, and logically the two phases are inextricably bound up together. If, in connection with our particular fundamental problem, we take the fundamental formula of Pantheism—'God is all that is, and all that is is God,'—we cannot refuse to apply this formula to the Vedānta even in its idealistic form. We may put the formula alongside the statement in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, ii. 4. 5: 'With the knowledge of the Ātman all is known,' and we may see that this text is susceptible of two interpretations: (1) apart from the Ātman there is nothing else to be known, or (2) in the knowledge of the Atman we have the key to all other knowledge. The two interpretations are inextricably linked together. Psychologically it is just a question whether the key will turn or not. If the Vedāntist finds the key hard to turn, i.e. if he cannot discover a satisfactory relation between the particularity of the world and the being of God, he adopts the short-hand method of negating the world altogether. It is true that he thus reaches what, from one point of view, might be called an idealistic position, but he does not cease to be a pantheist. He is still concerned more with the reality of the result than with the ideality of the method by which it is obtained, and his attitude is intended to be more religious than philosophical. He can still say 'God is All,' and 'All is God,' even though he may lay greater emphasis on the first than on the second. Idealism is simply the unitary aspect of Pantheism—a proceeding on the negative way until God is found in the Subject alone. To be truly pantheistic in his experience, the individual soul must be able to regard himself as one with God. The Vedāntist very frequently secures this position by denying of the individual everything

which makes this identification difficult. If we recur once more to Mr. Picton's definition of Pantheism as a system which 'absolutely identifies God and the universe, so that there cannot be anything but God,' we may say that the Vedānta philosophy often emphasizes the negative side of the definition without rendering the definition as a whole inappropriate to its own prevailing tendency.

We may conclude, then, that the two tendencies in the Vedānta may be fittingly indicated by the term 'Pantheism,' and that, besides these two tendencies, no other tendency, as e.g. theistic, manifests itself either markedly or consistently with the main principles of the system.

We may now turn to our other problem of this chapter—an inquiry into the prevailing effect which the Upanishads, regarded as mainly pantheistic, have upon our sense of the value of life. In short, are they optimistic or pessimistic? Having shown that they are pantheistic, we shall have very good reason to conclude that Pantheism must take the responsibility of the result, whatever that result may be. In considering this result we are not now dealing ultimately with a vague intellectual *milieu*, but with a definite attitude to life which seems inseparable from the philosophy which has been adopted.

We have seen that to the Vedāntic philosopher life presents itself as something from which we have to escape, and life is painted in colours of a prevailingly sombre hue. We may call to mind the stages by which we reach the highest life, and remember that both waking life and dreaming life are conditions of discomfort and even of misery. The earthly life is essentially that from which we need deliverance, and therefore the aim seems to be to

describe this life in such a way that the need will be felt in the most acute manner. Existence is more or less of a curse, and the question which seems to be always in the mind of the Vedāntic writers is, why any Being should have been so unwise or so indifferent as to produce such a state of things. Many passages in the Upanishads seem to anticipate the orthodox Stoic attitude to life, such as we find in the uncompromising statement of Marcus Aurelius that in this life ' we have nothing but darkness and dirt to grasp at ' (*Med.* v. 10).

We find this sense of disgust, this feeling of the futility, impermanence, and misery of all finite things expressed most clearly in the *Maitrāyana Upanishad*, i. 3 ff. We may make use of Monier Williams's verse rendering :

> In this decaying body made of bones,
> Skin, tendons, membranes, muscles, blood, saliva,
> Full of putrescence and impurity,
> What relish can there be for true enjoyment ?
> In this weak body, ever liable
> To wrath, ambition, avarice, illusion,
> To fear, grief, envy, hatred, separation
> From those we hold most dear, association
> With those we hate, continually exposed
> To hunger, thirst, disease, decrepitude,
> Emanation, growth, decline and death,
> What relish can there be for true enjoyment ?
> The Universe is tending to decay ;
> Grass, trees, and animals spring up and die.
> But what are they ? Earth's mighty men are gone,
> Leaving their joys and glories all.

The passage concludes with a quaint comparison of the worshipper to a frog at the bottom of a dry well, and a supplication, ' Deign to rescue me [lit. ' to take me out ']. Thou art our only refuge, Holy Lord.' All the elements of pessimism are here : disgust at particular objects and persons in

the world, dissatisfaction with the general scheme of things, sense of constraint and unquiet yearning for release. The well is very dry, and the sides of it are forbiddingly high, and the frog, poor mortal, is very helpless.

We have already spoken of the metaphysical mythological idea of *tapas* as containing implicitly a judgment of pessimism passed upon the world as a whole. The creation of the world is an act of self-renunciation on the part of Brahman, and involves labour, fatigue, and pain. The idea is near that the whole process is not altogether desirable. We may say, more generally and less metaphysically, that the whole ascetic ideal is a judgment of pessimism, passed upon the world of physical reality from which ascetic practices are to secure deliverance.

The general attitude of the Vedānta has been described in somewhat stern but not altogether unjustifiable terms by Mr. Greaves in the article already quoted from: 'The special feature of the Vedānta which regards the universe and all experience as a nightmare to be escaped from permeates its whole outlook on life. Salvation is the escape from everything which constitutes what we may call life. The attitude towards the world and the life encouraged by it is that of pure pessimism. It is not the pessimism which has arisen from the vision of abounding evil and pain having been so abounding as to hide from the view the great and good which do exist, but an attitude which brings all that is seen, the good and evil alike, under the category of the unreal and the worthless, and desires, as the one path of progress for the soul, a growing indifference to the reality and purpose of all that is comprised under the phrase 'cosmic process.' Alongside of this we may set the statement of an

Indian writer: 'Hindu philosophy is pessimism. It begins with a recognition of human sorrow, goes out in vain in quest of a proper remedy, and ultimately arrives at annihilation as the goal where human misery terminates only in the extinction of life. Even Schopenhauer does not speak in terms more lugubrious than those which form the prominent features of the phraseology and nomenclature of philosophy in our country.' [1]

We are not in a position as yet to discuss whether the two writers just quoted from are right in their estimate of the exact character of the pessimism with which they charge Indian philosophy. For our immediate purpose it is sufficient to notice their emphasis upon the lugubrious and nightmare view of life from which the Vedāntic writers seem to start. Now, little attempt is made, on the part of either Indian or European writers, to deny the sombre character of the picture of ordinary life which is given us in the Vedānta philosophy; but many of them protest most vehemently against the suggestion that the system as a whole is on this account to be labelled Pessimism. And it is unlikely that a protest so generally made should be without some warrant.

The contention, then, is that, before charging the system with pessimism, we should pay as much attention to the act and fact of deliverance as to the state from which we are delivered. We might point out, however, in passing, that the exceedingly sombre character of the state we have to be delivered from might, through the working of contrast, tempt us to be too easily satisfied with the character of the deliverance or with the degree of happiness therein promised. We should always remember that we ought to estimate happiness as

[1] Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 363.

something better than even the mixture of the rose-coloured and the grey of ordinary life, and not simply as better than the grey alone. We must also point out that the mere promise of deliverance is insufficient. The whole discussion turns upon two other questions: (1) whether the deliverance promised can really be effected; (2) whether, if obtained, it is worth having. It is obvious that, if these two questions are answered in the affirmative, the charge of pessimism must be abandoned.

We shall consider the latter question first. We shall assume for the time being that the deliverance can be effected, and we shall ask whether the ultimate state of the delivered soul, as described in the Upanishads, is properly regarded as a state of happiness or bliss. Of course we shall *not* attempt to show that it is happiness in the gross sense of being the satisfaction of our ordinary materialistic desires. Our argument will depend on whether or not a higher kind of happiness has been discovered and secured—a happiness which might be described as blessedness, or bliss. It would be well that this distinction should be kept resolutely in view, for a very common but futile answer to the charge of pessimism is to show that critics are merely disappointed in their expectation of happiness of a lower kind—the kind of happiness which is included in the Indian phrase, 'the fruit of works.' Now the Upanishads seem to be in thorough agreement with one another in describing the ultimate state as a state of bliss. Over and over again the promise is made to the aspirant that he will obtain bliss, and some of the most beautiful passages in the Upanishads are devoted to the creation of this expectation. The *ānandamaya* stage is the highest, and this is a state of bliss. Bliss is not only a quality of Brahman, but his very essence, and the devout worshipper, who

has reached the goal, participates in the very essence of Brahman. Cf. *Chhāndogya*, vii. 23. 1 : ' The Infinite is bliss. There is no bliss in anything finite. Infinity alone is bliss.' By means of union with Brahman we obtain both the benefit of deliverance and of absolute spiritual satisfaction. The idea of deliverance is emphasized in *Chhāndogya*, vii. 1. 6 : ' Those who depart from here after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds.' All disabilities are left behind. Cf. *Chhāndogya*, vii. 1. 3 : ' The knower of the Self passes beyond sorrow.' Cf. also *Chhāndogya*, vii. 4. 2 : ' Therefore he who has crossed that bank [which separates him from Brahman], if he is blind, ceases to be blind, if wounded, ceases to be wounded, if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted.' Freedom from fear is mentioned in the *Taittirīya Up.* ii. 4 : ' He who knows the bliss of that Brahman, he never fears.' Cf. also *Īśā*, 6, 7 : ' What sorrow, what trouble to him who has once beheld the unity ? ' Cf. also *Maitrāyaṇa*, vi. 34 and *Muṇḍaka*, iii. 2. 6. The more positive aspect of satisfaction is emphasized in innumerable passages. From the Self as obtained by the worshipper spring hope, memory, understanding (cf. *Chhāndogya*, vii. 26. 1). In viii. 3. 2 the end is described as the finding of treasure hidden in ground which we have often walked over without realizing what lay beneath. In the same Upanishad a long list of other possible modes of life is given, and the bliss of the enlightened man is said in every case to be a hundred times greater and better than the bliss which would be obtained from any other source. The opening lines of the passage recall the well-known lines in Isaiah xl. : ' Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall ; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' The Upanishad description

is of 'a noble young man—very swift, firm, and strong, for whom the whole world is full of wealth.' Yet his bliss is exceeded a hundred times by the bliss of the human genii, and their bliss again by the bliss of the divine genii, and so on, by an ascending scale and constant hundred-fold multiplication, until we reach the bliss of the Devas, the bliss of Indra, of Bṛihaspati, of Prajāpati, and finally the bliss of Brahman, which exceeds by a hundred times the bliss of the highest beneath him. The climax which concerns us is that this bliss of Brahman may also be enjoyed by 'the great sage who is free from desires.' A more general description of the ultimate state is given in *Maitrāyana*, vi. 34: 'He who by reflection of the purified spirit sinks into the self, experiences happiness which no words can describe, but which may be experienced in the inner heart.' The *Talavakāra Upanishad* also describes the highest state in general terms: 'If a man knows Brahman in this life he is blessed,' and we have much the same phrase in *Taittirīya*, ii. 1: 'He enjoys all blessings.' The intellectual and spiritual assertion which is at the basis of all happiness is stated in close connection with this happiness in *Kaṭha*, v. 14: 'They perceive that highest indescribable pleasure, saying, "This is that."' It is given spatial reference in *Chhāndogya*, iii. 12. 8: 'The ether which is around us is the same as the ether which is within us. The ether in the heart is omnipresent and unchanging. He who knows this obtains omnipresent and unchangeable happiness.'

In order to describe the promised bliss, one of the most common figures is the contrast between night and day, and the emphasis upon the beauty of everlasting day suggests many New Testament parallels. Brahman himself is light, and the light shines upon the faces of the worshippers. This is a con-

ception specially favoured in the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*; cf. iii. 11. 3: 'To him who has known this Brahma Upanishad, the sun does not rise and does not set. For him there is day, once for all.' The effect upon the worshipper is described in iv. 14. 2: 'Your face shines like one who knows Brahman' (cf. also viii. 4. 2). The idea of satisfaction with wisdom is introduced in a very comprehensive passage in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*, iii. 2. 5, which also combines both the negative and the positive aspects of the promised bliss: 'The sages are satisfied with *wisdom*. Their true self is manifested, their attachment ceases; they become tranquil. Obtaining the omnipresent everywhere, these wise men wholly enter into him.' There is a somewhat similar passage in the *Maṇḍūkya Upanishad*, 47, in which those who have true wisdom are said to describe the highest, who is at the same time the goal of all their striving, as 'free, peaceful, passionless, the abode of indescribable intensity of bliss, eternal, and eternally conscious of eternal objects.'

And, yet, is this tranquil bliss—a bliss of absorption rather than of communion—ultimately satisfying? To many minds it presents itself as unduly negative and abstract. It consists in turning away from all activities and experiences of ordinary life, and its content is hardly more describable than that of the Absolute to whom or to which only negative predicates would apply. One cannot get away from the feeling that this bliss which is promised is something of the nature of a soporific. It is the resultant of many artificial measures, including e.g. the repetition of the syllable *Om*, which repetition will bring us into the appropriate condition of concentration, or 'one-pointedness.' It is the culmination of a series of processes by which we divest ourselves of

the sheaths of our ordinary life and fling them from us as garments that are outworn. It is comparable metaphorically to the state of deep sleep, when our desires stand still and all our strivings cease.

Of course, the necessity of the negative movement in the spiritual life must be admitted. A certain amount of repression is necessary if the soul is to live. 'Il faut mourir à une vie pour entrer dans une autre.' Advance means opposition to the lower forms of happiness, but at the same time there must be recognition of those higher forms of happiness which consist in the conservation of the deepest value of the soul—such happiness as is described by George Eliot in the frequently quoted passage from *Romola*: 'One can only have the highest happiness —such as goes along with being a great man—by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as for ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before anything else because our souls see that it is good.' The distinction between the higher and the lower happiness is put here almost with the strength of paradox, but it is sufficiently clear that the negative movement of the soul is not sufficient in itself—and that it must result in a transformation and not simply in an annihilation of the desires. Unless the bliss of the enlightened soul includes this idea of the strengthening of all true desires and provides room for wealth of thought and of sympathy, then it is an empty thing. It is a bliss which is neither desirable nor attainable. Tennyson says of Virtue:

> She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
> To rest in a golden grove or to bask in a summer sky;
> Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

It seems that a distinction is emphasized here

which has been a good deal forgotten in the Upanishads. In their anxiety to withdraw the thoughts of men from lower and more materialistic desires, the writers of the Upanishads have dispensed with that high and spiritual reward which consists in the increase of the strength of the soul—' the wages of going on.' They have been so anxious to discountenance those who seek after a heaven of more or less material bliss that they have gone to the opposite extreme and conceived an ideal state which is mainly the negation of bliss—an eternal life of passive contentment without sufficient character to preserve the personality of the soul. The home of the spirit is swept and garnished—purified of all that is earthly; but mere sweeping and garnishing, mere purification does not ensure that heavenly guests will take the place of the earthly. And until these heavenly guests come in, there is no bliss in the true sense of the word. There may be quietness, but it is the quietness of death.

Of course, at this point we may be referred to such passages as *Chhāndogya*, viii. 1. 6, which describes the state of bliss in a more positive way, and speaks of ' discovering the Self and *those true desires*.' This phrase Max Müller interprets as ' the desires which we ought to desire, the fulfilment of which depends entirely upon ourselves.' But this does not help us very much in the discovery of a positive content for the ideal self. It is essentially a Stoic attitude, and its tendency is entirely negative. For there are, properly speaking, no desires whose satisfaction depends entirely upon ourselves, because in its very nature desire implies a going forth beyond ourselves. Restriction to desires which depend solely on ourselves would very quickly come to mean the annihilation of desire. If we are so self-sufficient in our desires, there is a danger that we

may soon come to desire nothing at all, or even that we may relapse into a refined form of selfishness through the very effort to destroy selfishness and to concentrate upon the subjective state of abandonment of desire. For the preservation of moral health we must have a connection with the universal by positive affirmation. Merely negative withdrawal from an individualistic state is not sufficient.

The purification from earthly desire which is rightly inculcated in the Upanishads is carried so far as to become annihilation. There is no crowning of life's joy, no transformation of the joys of earth into the joys of heaven, no return of the transfigured soul to a world which God has made. The break is abrupt and complete, and results in a mournfully ascetic tone such as we find in the *Katha Upanishad*, ii. 6, 12 : 'When *all* desires that dwell in the heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal,' and again, three verses further on : 'When *all* the ties of the heart are severed here on earth, then the mortal becomes immortal.' All our ordinary kinds of happiness are but 'fictitious portions of the total blessedness,' and have to be abandoned in order that this blessedness may be reached. The bliss we are to strive for is the result of abstraction. We cannot describe it except by saying that it is *not* the happiness of ordinary life. In the *Katha Upanishad*, ii. 12, we read : 'Having recognized, by the knowledge obtained through spiritual abstraction, that divine being who is difficult to be seen, who is hidden, who pervades all things, who is in the heart, who lives in inaccessible places—the wise man gives up joy and sorrow.' Not only the sorrows but also the joys of life have to be left behind—yet this bliss, which is the result only of abstraction and negation, in no way renounces its claim to be described as bliss.

Can we say that this claim is justified? Does it not seem necessary that any bliss, which is to maintain its attraction, should justify the impulses which are essential to human nature? If it does not, if it is to be obtained by negation, and if what is obtained is merely abstract, then a reaction in the direction of pessimism is almost inevitable. The bliss cannot hold us. 'Nature, if it is thrust out at the door, will come back by the window,' and, if denied admittance, will cause confusion in the soul. 'Freedom is the right to do; it is not the right wholly to abstain from doing,' and provision for action must be made in the ideal. If the ideal does not allow free play for human activity, it will seem to be without content and unsuitable as the crowning of a life of action. It will be out of connection with the ordinary experiences of life. The activity which remains unexercised will react upon the mind of the worshipper, and produce a sense of bafflement and disappointment. The bliss has been purchased by the sacrifice of human experience and activity, and yet does not provide for any higher exercise. The price, therefore, which has been paid for it comes to be reckoned as excessive, and in their disappointment men are apt to pass on to the judgment that, if happiness is not to be found in the ordinary world, it is not to be found anywhere. They are especially likely to do this if the happiness which is promised to them in contrast to that of the ordinary world is of so vague and shadowy a character as that which is described in the Upanishads.

Further, it is not enough that an ideal should be a moral defence against the allurement of lower pleasures; it should also be a support amidst the sorrows of the empirical level. If it cannot afford this support, the sorrows of human life become overwhelming. It may be said that the negative

ideal certainly teaches us the unimportance of human affairs, and so engenders a Stoic attitude. Nothing matters, so why should human sorrow matter? But it seems, in the first place, almost a misuse of terms to describe this attitude of stony indifference as bliss, and, in the second place, it is admittedly most difficult to maintain such an attitude. It is only if we are able to say that something *does* matter in another sphere, even if not in this, that we are also able to say that nothing is of any great consequence in any particular situation. In other words, a morally disconcerting positive can be met satisfactorily only by another positive—this time of a morally stimulating and comforting character. The morally disconcerting positive we are here concerned with is the fact of human sorrow, and it can be dealt with only by a positive bliss which is not merely a contempt for human sorrow, but a penetration of it and the discovery of a joy hidden in the deeper sources of human experience.

This criticism is specially applicable when we consider that the writers of the Upanishads have not by any means kept at a distance the facts of human sorrow. As we have already seen, their picture of the life from which we have to escape is particularly sombre. Therefore the light of the bliss which they promise in other passages must be specially strong in order to drive away the shadows in which they have shown us that we are living. They have not hesitated to point out the evils of the actual. Therefore the demand is all the more urgent that they should, through their ideal, make it possible that, even in the dark days of sorrow, songs of praise should arise from the heart of the worshipper. It cannot be said that they have risen to this proportional demand. They have told us that everything outside of Brahman is misery, and we

naturally expect that everything constituted by Brahman will be joy; but when we inquire into this constitution of Brahman we find that it is abstract and negative. Our practical conclusion, then, is that all that is qualifiable must be qualified as misery. If the ideal thus fails to place itself in our imagination over against the gloom of the actual, the result will be that men will continue hopeless in the midst of the troubles of their ordinary life or pursue the fitful pleasures of that life until satiety brings disappointment.

We may now turn to the second question which was raised, and ask whether the ideal, even if valuable, is attainable. A partial reply has already been given to this question in showing the detachment of the ideal from human activity. More generally, we may point out that possibility of attainment is an essential part of the attraction of any ideal. Even though we picture the ideal bliss in the most alluring form, its allurement will soon lessen in force if it is shown to be beyond the reach of human endeavour.

Now it would seem that, if an ideal is really to move us to action, it must include the idea of happiness in the sense of the positive satisfaction of the highest impulses of our nature. We must believe that something positive is produced by the fighting and the wounds of the struggle, otherwise the struggle will soon cease. A positive ideal would thus seem to be the only attainable ideal. As Eucken puts it: 'Opposition to human life does not apply to happiness so much as to lower and inadequate conceptions of happiness. Indeed it is a thing to be insisted on that man should let the thought of happiness control his efforts, for it is only by doing so that he can put all the vigour and the strength of his emotions into his actions. He

cannot devote all his energies to the struggle after anything from which he does not expect to find satisfaction for his own nature.' [1]

Now the Vedāntists seem to have confined their attention to the opposition to lower forms of happiness. They have not realized that the ideal which they retain must be of such a character as to call forth energy in the struggle. We can attain an end only by desire strong enough to reach beyond present attainment. But all such desire has been excluded by the Vedāntist, and so, taking human nature as it is, the goal is unattainable and the bliss is out of our reach. Joy is promised to the delivered soul, but the means of attaining that deliverance are denied him, and so joy turns to bitterness and optimism to pessimism. There is a fundamental paradox: it is only by desire that we can reach the state of freedom from desire. Though we cannot speak of the end as happiness in the sense of positive fulfilment, yet, as has been said, 'even the Indian sage strives for happiness, when he strives as far as possible to negate life and to bring it into a condition of absolute repose and, indeed, indifference.' The word 'bliss' is relative to desire—it is what is gained through desire, and would otherwise be unmeaning. But desire is a sin, something to be got rid of. Bliss, therefore, can be gained only by means of the exercise of an impulse of our nature which ought to have been condemned. Thus the successful devotee, if he could imagine himself to have reached his goal, would also have to imagine himself as having gained his good end by evil means, and to this extent his bliss will fall short of completeness. We find ourselves, then, shut up to the admission that, if the ideal described in the Upanishads is to stand, there are no means of reach-

[1] *Problems of Human Life*, p. 337.

ing it. To put it paradoxically—it can be reached only by the abandonment of it as an ideal.

Thus we are compelled to answer in the negative the two questions with which we started. No satisfactory means are provided for reaching the bliss which is promised, and, even if it were reached, it would not commend itself as adequate. The result is a distinct tendency in the direction of pessimism, and the shadows of this pessimism deepen as century succeeds century. A certain amount of development in the pessimistic tendency may be traced. The earlier Upanishads are content to refer to the gloomy aspect of things in what Deussen calls 'a discreet and modest way.' In the late *Maitrāyaṇa Upanishad*, from which we have extensively quoted, the pessimistic interpretation is much more prominent. It is perhaps not possible to say that Śaṅkara is explicitly pessimistic, but we may at least note that he is regarded as such by his controversial opponents. A sense of the coldness and futility of Śaṅkara's interpretation is expressed by Rāmānuja in his commentary on ii. 3. 42 : 'Truly, if such were the purport of the Veda, what more would the Veda be than the idle talk of a person out of his mind ?' Such a passage hardly breathes contentment with the prevailing view, and in another place there is the expression of a revolt against that loss of personal existence which is an implication of much of the teaching of the Upanishads. The price is felt to be too big. 'A man who suffers pain, mental or other kind, naturally begins to reflect how he may once for all free himself from all the manifold afflictions and enjoy a state of untroubled ease : the desire for final release thus having arisen in him, he at once sets to work to accomplish it. If, on the other hand, he were to realize that the effect of such activity would be the

loss of personal existence, he surely would turn away as soon as somebody began to tell him about release. And the result would be that, in the absence of willing and qualified pupils, the whole teaching about release would lose its authoritativeness. . . . No sensible person exerts himself under the influence of the idea that, after he himself has perished, there will remain some entity called "pure light."'[1] The defects which have been pointed out by Rāmānuja, and which he himself has not succeeded in removing, are inseparable from the prevailing tendency of the Upanishads. The position assumed is depressing to our sense of the value of life. That this effect has been generally felt is proved by the verdict of history. Rāmānuja even points out the small influence which such teaching can have upon life, and its unpopularity, shown clearly in the absence of pupils. The negative and abstract form of bliss which is described in many parts of the Upanishads has appealed to Brahmanic students only. As Dr. Thibaut points out: 'It has never had any wide-reaching influence upon the masses of India. It is too little in sympathy with the wants of the human heart, which, after all, are not so very different in India from what they are elsewhere. Comparatively few even in India are those who rejoice in the idea of a universal non-personal essence in which their individuality is to be merged and lost for ever, who think it sweet to be wrecked in the ocean of the infinite.'[2]

The charge of failure to meet human need is the charge which may be brought against the Upanishads, and from this charge their presentation of a blissful final state does not defend them, for the bliss which they offer is empty, abstract, alien.

[1] Rāmānuja's *Comm.* I. 1, p. 70. (Thibaut's Translation.)
[2] Thibaut's Introd. to *Commentaries*, p. cxxviii.

Therefore, on the whole the tendency is in the direction of pessimism rather than of optimism. As the result of what we claim to be an impartial investigation, we have found a close connection between Pantheism and pessimism in the case of the Vedānta philosophy. Pantheism is the prevailing character of the philosophy and pessimism is the prevailing result. In the next few chapters we shall endeavour to assign some reasons for this connection in Indian philosophy, and ascertain what particular elements in the Pantheism of the Vedānta are likely to bring about a pessimistic result.

CHAPTER IX

THE CAUSES OF PESSIMISM IN METAPHYSICAL AND RELIGIOUS INADEQUACY

What are some of the characteristics of the Vedānta philosophy which may be assigned as possible cause of the pessimism associated with it ?

The first cause which may be suggested is that the teaching of the Upanishads is at once too intellectual and not intellectual enough. It places the whole, or at least the greater part, of the burden of deliverance upon the intellect, and thus crushes it with a weight which is too great for it to bear. At the same time, because of false abstraction, the powers of the intellect are not sufficiently utilized, so that it does not perform the full service which might legitimately be expected of it—it stoops under the burden too readily, and does not indicate the sources from which assistance might be derived. In other words, the intellect, on the one hand, makes excessive claims and usurps the place of other faculties of the soul, and on the other hand it does not substantiate the claims which it might legitimately make, and allows its place to be usurped in turn by other forms of consciousness. In either case there is disappointment, due in part to the sacrifice of the other powers of human nature and in part to the sacrifice of the intellect itself.

From certain points of view the process of deliverance indicated in the Upanishads might be described

as exclusively intellectual. There is little emotional colouring or practical application. Deliverance is to be gained by insight, and not by action. As is said in the *Maitrāyaṇa Upanishad* (8. 34. 11): 'Mind alone is the cause of bondage and liberty for men: if attached to the world it becomes bound; if free from the world, that is liberty.' This passage is in accordance with the statement frequently made that, while the Bible discovers depravity on the volitional side, the Upanishads discover it on the intellectual side. It is of course true, as we have seen, that the Upanishads allow a certain amount of value to activity. We have discussed the degree of importance assigned to the performance of good works, and we have seen that what might be called the inner aspect of goodness —the necessity of sincerity and purity—has not been left unrecognized. Nevertheless, even though it be exceedingly dangerous to omit good works, the importance of the outward practical side is on the whole subordinate. It is still 'darkness' into which they who are immersed in works enter. Moreover, the condition of the pure will is regarded as a means to the end of deliverance, and not as that in which deliverance consists. The main emphasis is laid on a purely intellectual attitude.

Nor can it be said that the emotional element is strong in the Upanishads themselves. Though it comes to its own, and more than its own, in later *bhakti* literature and religion, yet this was as a reaction from, rather than as a development out of, the prevailing teaching of the Upanishads. The slightly warmer colouring of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* shown in such a passage as 'A husband is loved for the love of the Self, which is one within us all,' indicates an emotional rapture which is, on the whole, rare in these writings. The bliss which is

offered is, in the final result, as we have just seen, of an exceedingly rarefied kind. It is vacuity of feeling, rather than positive content. The general position of the Vedāntist is that the emotions belong to the lower region of the soul and take their place amongst those desires which must be sacrificed before any deliverance is possible.

Yet, although the predominance of the intellectual attitude was asserted, the Vedāntist would have protested vigorously against the idea that he was thinking only of the purely logical or discursive intellect. He would have insisted that intellect, according to him, was of a more intuitive as well as of a more comprehensive character. Was not the *ānandamaya* stage above the *vijñānamaya*, and this again above the *manamaya?* This defence may be fully admitted, and the exact character of the intellect upon which dependence is placed will be further discussed. But the important point just here is that as no positive meaning is given to any non-intellectual elements, or whatever they may have is borrowed from the contemplation which induces them, the vague presence of these non-intellectual elements does not relieve us from the necessity of dealing with the situation created by the strong emphasis upon the intellect alone. It will be found that the non-intellectual elements come in mainly as a result of the breakdown of the claims of the intellect, and not as a natural consequence or expansion of these claims.

To these claims in all their exclusiveness we must now turn, and study their effect upon the view of life. We may notice at this stage, however, that exclusive reliance upon the intellect is not peculiar to the Vedānta amongst pantheistic systems. There seems to be an essential connection between Pantheism and intellectualism, and indeed the latter

may be assigned as one of the chief causes of the emergence of the former. Prof. Upton, in his *Hibbert Lecture*, points out that the Pantheism of the East is the inevitable result of intellectualism. It is 'like the Pantheism of Spinoza and Hegel, the inevitable result of treating the relation between the soul and the immanent God as simply an intellectual or rational relation' (p. 28). So, if we have been correct in describing Vedāntism as pantheistic, we shall naturally expect to find a strong strain of intellectualism in it. We shall expect to find that religion is more a form of knowledge than anything else, and that the religious attitude is the interpretation of a fixed relation in which the soul of the worshipper is of one piece, as it were, with the worshipped, and has, at any rate, no need to hope or to strive or to fear. It was by knowledge that the goal of the Upanishads was to be reached; the aim of the devotee was 'to *recognize* his own self as a limited reflection of the Highest, to *know* his self as the highest Self, and *through that knowledge* to return to it and regain his identity with it. Here to know was to be, to know the Ātman was to be the Ātman.'[1] The italics are our own, and sufficiently bring out our point, showing that the Upanishads and the Vedānta generally must take their place in a long succession of systems, both Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, which have been dominated by intellectualism—by the belief, as Deussen puts it, that 'the innermost essence of man and of the universe, call it Brahman, first principle or deity, can bear any similarity or analogy with that which we meet with here, "behind man's pale forehead" as consciousness, thought, or spirit.'[2] We are here not

[1] Max Müller, *Sacred Books of the East*, Introd., p. xxx.
[2] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 132.

so much concerned indeed with the ultimate nature of the Absolute as with the means of attaining connection with it. But the two considerations are intimately bound up together. As are the means employed, so is the end conceived, and *vice versa*. Is this confidence in the intellect, which with the Vedāntist we have seen to be by no means slight, justified? The question is as yet quite general, and refers to the capability of the intellect to perform the task allotted to it, apart from questions of the metaphysical satisfactoriness of the particular solution offered. Into this adequacy or inadequacy of the solution and of the *particular* type of intellectual activity exercised in bringing about the solution, we shall inquire later.

Specialization on intellectual lines undoubtedly carries with it a certain exaltation of mood, as e.g. the thrill of the student in his study or the rapture of the recluse in the forest; but it is on the whole apt to produce a somewhat grey view of life. In India especially contemplation belongs to the period of life when the active duties of the householder and the citizen are dispensed with, and there would seem to be a certain amount of fittingness about this association of intellect with the evening of life. We might take it as a racial illustration in actual practice of the saying of Hegel that 'the shades of evening have already fallen when the owl of Minerva takes her flight.' It is difficult to rid ourselves of this twilight melancholy so long as we keep within the region of the mere intellect, and sometimes one is almost inclined to agree with the words of another German writer, 'Ich weiss vom Fluch der Philosophie ein traurig Lied zu singen: von ihrem Segen, auf diesem Feld, weiss Ich wenig. Sie ist keine Mutter, sie hat ein Gesicht von stein.'[1]

[1] Gustav Frennsen, *Die Drei Getreuen*.

This stony and rigid aspect of the reality represented by the intellect only is a result of its static method. This has been sufficiently emphasized in recent philosophy, the essence of the criticism being that the intellect, by its immobile character and use of mechanical and mathematical categories, is incapable of dealing with life. It thus lets the greater part of reality slip through the meshes of its system, and what is left remains as an oppressive necessity which, however much it may be resented, cannot be changed. We are restricted to the world as it is and not as it ought to be. We contemplate the actual without distinction of value or of good or evil, and, if we are discontented, we are not encouraged to transform the causes of our discontent, but simply to neglect them. Intellectualism thus leads on naturally to the emancipation doctrine, with its implied judgment as to the hopelessness of ordinary experience. As was the case later in the philosophy of Plotinus, all change is regarded as a degradation from the higher condition of divine immobility, and so the possibility of ultimate relief through change is closed against us.

A depressing contrast thus arises between natural and normal human impulse and the conceived character of reality. We all know that the quickest way to get rid of a melancholy mood is to go and do something, but such a remedy is impossible in a system in which action is despised. The truth is that, if we are forced back on speculation merely, a burden is laid upon the intellectual faculties greater than they can bear, and the other faculties of the soul are not permitted to bear any burden at all. There is an implicit surrender to the inevitable of the powers of the soul. Intellectualism readily passes over into naturalism, in which there is no place for the only activity worth having—the

activity consisting in a progress which is regarded as a task or vocation of humanity, and not as a mere process inherent in the being of the world. A process which works out no purpose is hardly better than immobility, and in any case even process is hardly comprehended by rigorous intellectualism. It favours a static universe.

Again, when undue emphasis is laid upon the intellect, its claims are apt to be exaggerated in another direction. If we trust everything to reason we may become oblivious to the fact that reason must always have an object which is not *constituted by* reason but is *given to* reason for interpretation. The danger in intellectualism is that its thought claims to arrive at completeness within itself—it claims to constitute reality, and, as reality refuses to be thus constituted, thought is foredoomed to failure.[1] This consequence is perhaps not so close to the Vedānta as to some Western intellectualistic systems. In the Vedānta it is hardly correct to say that thought is constitutive of reality, as there is a tendency to regard reality as vaguer than thought (and we have already noticed a discussion as to whether Brahman *is* thought or *has* thought). But, nevertheless, it is the abstract procedure of thought which is mainly relied on in the Upanishads to bring us into contact with reality. Even if we admit, with Bradley, that in the presence of the Absolute Reality thought itself no longer exists, yet, if we have adopted no other means of attaching ourselves to reality, if thought has been exclusively relied upon, the depressing conclusion is very near that *nothing* exists. And we have seen that the ultimate reality of the Vedāntist is always on the border-line of nothingness. Thought, when exclusively relied upon, over-reaches and annihilates itself.

[1] Cf. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 383.

In general it may be said that the response of the human soul to the problems of the world can never be made wholly from the intellectual side, and if an attempt is made thus to restrict the response, the inevitable result is a sense of failure, confusion, and inadequacy. This depressing consequence is to a certain extent independent of the internal coherency or logical success of the system which may be constructed by the particular intellectual effort. It embodies rather a general sense of the futility of all *merely* intellectual constructions, however well put together they may be. It is a result of the overloading of the intellectual faculties as such, apart from the success or failure of the particular intellectual construction adopted. Of course, if the intellectual construction should turn out to be metaphysically unsatisfactory, this would be an additional reason for depression, but even a logically consistent system might cause depression if, because of its exclusive intellectualism, it is too far separated from ordinary experiences of life.

The further question of the metaphysical adequacy of the system has to be considered, but, before going on to this, one or two other general considerations may be noted. An exclusive reliance upon intellect is apt to result in an exclusive attitude on the part of the philosopher towards his fellowmen. After all, intellectual procedure is possible only for the few, and if deliverance can be accomplished only by this procedure, deliverance is also restricted in its application. If philosophy is made to do the work of religion, the value of the so-called religion can be appreciated and experienced only by the few who are able to undertake philosophical speculation. If faith and knowledge are identified, a monopoly of religion is established in favour of the intellectual man, and his attitude to the un-

philosophical vulgar is apt to be one of lofty disdain. This consequence of an intellectualistic view of religion has been well marked both in East and West wherever faith has been confounded with knowledge.

This restriction is fully admitted and in many cases commended by the writers of the Upanishads. Cf. *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*, vi. 22 : 'This highest mystery in the Vedānta, delivered in a former age, should not be given to one whose passions have not been subdued, nor to one who is not a son or who is not a pupil.' This is an emphasis upon external conditions to a certain extent, and is a carrying out of the idea that the Upanishads contain secret doctrines which are to be imparted only to the few. Such a tendency of intellectualism finds ready acceptance in a country where the caste spirit is strong. In fact, it might be said that the caste spirit is a concrete embodiment of the tendency. There is action and reaction between the two kinds of exclusiveness—the intellectual and the social—resulting in the strengthening of both. It is allowed, indeed, that for the people of the lower and illiterate classes an inferior kind of salvation is possible, but this is regarded by the educated classes as a salvation hardly worth having. In any case, the means towards the higher and fuller salvation are not regarded as available for a Śūdra or low-caste person. In various parts of the literature terrible penalties are threatened for those who venture to teach the doctrine of the Vedas to a Śūdra. We are told that 'the ears of the Śūdra who hears the Vedas are to be filled with molten lead and lac,' and if he dares pronounce it his tongue is to be slit. The extreme of abhorrent exclusiveness is revealed in the saying, 'A Śūdra is like a cemetery, therefore the Veda is not to be read in the vicinity of a Śūdra.' The

exclusive attitude is maintained also in Śaṅkara's *Commentary*; cf. *Ved. Sūtras*, i. 3. 25: 'For the shastra does in reality entitle men of the three upper castes only. For only these are not excluded by prohibitions and are subject to the precepts about the *upanayana* ceremony.' This last restriction is further explained in i. 3. 34, where it is stated that the Śūdras have no claim to the knowledge of Brahman on account of their not studying the Vedas. From this study they are excluded because they have not performed the *upanayana* ceremony, which belongs to the three highest castes only.

It may be argued, of course, that we find this intellectual and pantheistic attitude combined in the course of history with an approbation of an idolatrous system in which the needs of the lower classes are fully recognized, and that therefore it is unfair to press the charge of exclusiveness. But this permission and authorization of idolatry seems to be rather an attempt to find an excuse for the intellectualistic attitude. It is certainly not a refutation of it, for the spirit of exclusiveness is still there. The educated man asserts that the idol worship is *only* for the lower classes. He himself would not participate in it except as a social concession and for the sake of example. The appearance of catholicity remains, then, an appearance only, and is not consciously deduced from the central intellectual position.

It might, of course, be possible to argue that this exclusiveness arose from a high sense of the value of religious truth and also from a paedagogic impulse. The truth to be imparted was regarded as so precious that extreme care had to be exercised in its impartation. There may be here a genuine reflection of the idea that 'only the pure in heart may see God,' and, if this is so, certainly no criticism

would be in place. But, in order to secure an adequate defence on these lines, we should have to make sure that the possibility of finding purity of heart in any class of persons was duly recognized and that artificial restrictions of birth and education were not regarded as important in themselves. We can hardly, however, discover this security. Much the same might be said about the paedagogic impulse. It may be necessary to impart religious truth bit by bit, line upon line, and precept upon precept, and it may be true that only those who have mastered the lower are fit for the higher; but here again we must demand equality of opportunity before the religious ideal is satisfied. To every one must be given at least the *chance* of passing through these stages, and we have no assurance that this opportunity will be given. The matter may be put even more strongly. It may be pointed out that, even if we had this assurance of equality of opportunity, danger of exclusiveness is still present whenever religion is made to depend too much upon a slow educational process. Education has always attached to it certain artificial restrictions, whereas the possibility of the highest religious relationship ought to be thrown open to men as men, and not simply as educated men. Max Müller tries to defend the exclusion of the lowest classes by saying that 'to admit them to a study of the Veda would be like admitting naked savages to the lecture-room of the Royal Institution.' But this little piece of satire misses the point. It is itself an evidence of an intellectualistic point of view in religion. It depends for its force upon the assumption that the subject matter of religion is exactly the same as that which is under investigation in the Royal Institution. If this similarity had been established then the exclusion of the 'naked savages' would

have been natural and necessary. But what we are arguing for is that this assumption is gratuitous, and that it is a mistake to take a view of religion which excludes from its highest levels not merely the ' naked savages ' but that very considerable part of the human race which has not had the opportunity of elaborate intellectual culture.

Thus we cannot satisfactorily escape from the feeling that the general tone of the Upanishads and of the Vedānta is that of a message which appeals only to the few. The vulgar mind is regarded as fundamentally unfit for the highest religious truth. As Dr. Barnett says : ' The only life worth living is that which is vouchsafed to the few elect—union of the soul with the transcendental Brahman ; all other existence, whatever it may be, is wretched—an infinite number of souls, flitting in constant sorrow and blindness through every degree of organic embodiment.' [1]

What is the general result of this attitude ? Archer Butler points out two extreme consequences for the mass of the nation. These are ' the perpetuation of ignorance and the encouragement of imposture, to both of which it manifestly tends—to the former by being unfitted for the vulgar mind, and to the latter by countenancing pretensions to supernatural power.' Privilege is apt to produce a claim to greater privilege still. The exclusive possession of intellectual culture, when strongly emphasized, very often passes over, in the presence of masses of people filled with wondering admiration, into the assumption of supernatural power. At the other extreme the ascription to the lower classes of intellectual and religious incapacity results in a passive acknowledgement of this incapacity which shows itself practically in the perpetuation

[1] *Brahma Knowledge*, p. 17.

of ignorance. Thus a certain amount of hopelessness is engendered amongst the excluded classes if they are told that the only salvation possible for them is of an inferior kind, and that there is some other and higher blissful condition from which they are shut out. And amongst the philosophers themselves the effect must be somewhat depressing. Amongst the best of them, at any rate, there will be a certain amount of discomfort at the thought that the salvation which is possible for them is impossible for the vast majority of their fellow-men. They, the privileged classes, cannot for long be content with having discovered a privilege and not a panacea. The consciousness of having no good news for all mankind is a somewhat chilling one, and the evangelical impulse which is characteristic of the noblest natures will not always consent to the denial of an outlet. If the great world of humanity has to exist in darkness, there is small consolation in the thought that a few select souls may be permitted to live in the light.

We may leave further consideration of the consequences generally of putting too great a burden on the intellect, and turn to the particular burden which is here laid upon us. Is the solution which is offered to us in the Upanishads of such a character as to form an exception to the general disability of all intellectualistic systems, or does it carry peculiar disabilities within itself? If the latter, can it gradually develop into a more comprehensive system, or are the defects to be met by way of reaction only? These questions must be favourably answered if we are to escape pessimistic conclusions.

Any reference to the metaphysical consistency of the particular solution offered will probably be met at once by the objection that even if this

metaphysical inadequacy is proved, such inadequacy cannot be urged as a cause of pessimism. Do we mean to say that every system which fails to prove its thorough-going logicality is productive of pessimism ? If this were so, the world would be in a bad way. Of course, we do not mean to take up any such extreme position, but at the same time it may be urged that there are in the case of the philosophy of the Upanishads special reasons for connecting metaphysical failure with pessimistic tendency. One of these reasons is just the excessive intellectualism we have already noticed. If everything—including the proper estimate of life—is staked upon an intellectual success, then the solution offered must be scrutinized with great thoroughness. We have only the one support, and that, therefore, must be secure. Emancipation is not only brought about by knowledge—it is knowledge. Therefore the knowledge must prove itself satisfactory, for it is all we have to depend upon. In the Vedāntist ideal intellectual opinions are not allowed to remain separate from actual life. They are not a kind of dogmatic theology from which religion, as a life, may be formally distinguished. They are supposed to be the direct determinants of our general view of life, and are closely bound up with our emotional and practical attitude. Therefore any intellectual unsatisfactoriness will have a very direct outcome in a pessimistic view of life.

Is the system, then, metaphysically unsatisfactory ? At this stage we shall temporarily confine ourselves for the most part to the negative interpretation of the Upanishad philosophy. The consequences of the more positive and naturalistic phase will come up for discussion later on and in connection with more practical aspects.

We have seen that in many passages there are

evidences of failure to reach an ideal of unity in diversity, and recourse is had to the expedient of denying the reality of the finite world. The attention is turned away from the finite world, and its problems are regarded as born only of illusion and error. All ordinary experience is negated and its difficulties neglected.

> But what are time and space, whose rough extension
> Will separate what is so near allied ?
> Are they not taught to be a mere illusion ?
> May we not be against them fortified ?

Such methods of negation are decidedly convenient, and the result is obvious. As Mr. Worsley, who, as a rule, is by no means a harsh critic of the Vedānta, puts it : 'The Vedānta is a negative philosophy for the reason only that, when seeking to explain the phenomenal, it simply tells us that what is manifest is illusory, and by this means gets over any necessity for conceiving either of creation or of manifestation or of actuality.' [1] It is, no doubt, consoling for a time at least to discover that the problems which worry us in connection with ordinary experience are really no problems at all, inasmuch as their data are unreal. Still, the intellectual deliverance which comes to us by way of negation is temporary only. We may obtain it and feel satisfaction in it only in rare moments of exalted contemplation. It is not in sufficiently close touch with the demands of human nature, and does not take sufficient account of ordinary tendencies. Even Śaṅkara admits that to treat the Subject as the Object is 'a habit inherent in human nature, a necessity of thought.' Human life will not for long permit itself 'to be cramped or maimed in the strait-jacket of a premature synthesis.' In

[1] *Concepts of Monism*, p. 90.

other words, it is more natural for us to trust our faculties when they bring us into contact with facts which are independent of our mere imaginings. We are inclined to believe that they bring us into contact with a real world and put us in a position for appreciating its riches. If we attempt to contradict what we usually trust as our natural tendencies, there is bound to be a sudden return to the level of ordinary consciousness, and we come to regard our abstract speculations much as Hume did in the famous passage in *The Treatise on Human Nature*: 'I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I return to these speculations, they appear so cold, strained, and ridiculous that I cannot find it in my heart to enter into them any further.'

We find that in such an attitude as we are considering there is involved not only a distrust of present ordinary experience, but a disregard of history as well. This would seem to shut us out from the inspiration of the past, and also to lay us open to the danger that, if we will not learn from the past, we cannot adjust ourselves to the future.

In general it cannot be doubted that this distrust of ordinary experience, when carried to the extreme to which it is carried in the Vedānta, is bound to result in pessimism. The speculations recommended to us are too high for us. We demand for our satisfaction a solution, not apart from experience, but within experience, and, if we cannot get one of the latter kind, we are apt to think that there is no solution anywhere. Under the guidance of Vedānta tendencies we walk for the most part in the vagueness of a dream with a haunting sense of unreality. Our trust in our ordinary faculties is destroyed, and we feel that, if we cannot trust them, we cannot

trust anything. Yet it is doubtful whether, in our dream-world, we have found anything positive enough to satisfy our souls, and, when our ordinary experiences press in upon us, we are utterly at a loss. Our dream is broken, and we are helpless in the face of the problems of the actual. We have asserted, or at least permitted the assertion, of two worlds with little connection between them. Our philosophic peace is in one world, but our actual life is in the other, and so the peace is unattained.

We find that those who follow the lead of Śaṅkara in the interpretation of the Vedānta philosophy sometimes grow rather uncomfortable as they get farther and farther away from ordinary experience. They express, e.g., great abhorrence of the idea that their philosophy has any connection with the sensationalism of the Buddhists. The Buddhists had reduced all reality to states of consciousness having momentary existence merely, and it was asserted by some that this was also the tendency of abstract Vedāntic teaching. 'To a certain extent the Vedāntists are idealists, and to this extent—to the extent of saying that everything is in the mind—there is similarity between Śaṅkara's position and that of the Buddhists. But, nevertheless, Śaṅkara sets himself vigorously to refute the charge of identification between his own system and Buddhism, and, if the defence is justified, we shall find a certain relief from the sense of unreality which is inevitably associated with his solution of the world problems.

The Buddhists hold that 'the nature of external perception is similar to that of a dream.' To this Śaṅkara replies simply, 'It is impossible to judge that external things have no existence, and why?—because we are conscious of them. . . . Nobody, when perceiving a post or a wall, is conscious of his own perception only; but all men are conscious of

posts and walls, and the like are the objects of their perceptions. . . . If there is nothing external, how can anything seem to be external? No one can be like the son of a barren mother' (ii. 2. 28). In another passage he draws more definitely the distinction between dreams and waking experience. He accepts without reserve *Sūtra*, iii. 2. 3, which tells us that the dream-world is a mere illusion (*māyā*) on account of its nature not manifesting itself with the totality of the attributes of reality, and he explains this to mean 'It is not true that the world of dreams is true; it is mere illusion, and there is not a particle of reality in it.'

Now, as we have already had occasion to point out, this argument is inconsistent with Śaṅkara's mainly negative position, and, if the argument were allowed to stand, the negative position would have to be abandoned. If Śaṅkara decides ultimately to stand by his negative position he cannot use this argument. If the whole of waking experience is a dream, it is difficult to see how any part of waking experience is to be called the negation of a dream. Śaṅkara has asserted over and over again the unreality of everything except the Self, and has told us that the accession and departure of the world makes no difference to the Self. It is as much an illusion as to take a piece of rope for a snake. Now Śaṅkara would seem to have become alarmed at the logical consequences of his doctrines, and he wishes to stop short before the consequences are fully drawn out. He attempts, therefore, to take up at one and the same time the positions of trusting ordinary consciousness and refusing to trust it. When he wishes to refute the Buddhist sensationalism, as we have already seen, he trusts experience and strongly maintains the reality of our perceptions. He even goes the length—in Jacobs's words—of 'supporting

the tenet of the material causality of Brahman.' On the other hand, when he wishes to keep strongly to the monistic position, he does this by emphasizing the doctrine of *māyā* with all that this implies in the way of distrust of ordinary experience.

This point is worth considering a little more fully than we did in a previous chapter. It has been said (e.g. by Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan) that the position of the Buddhists and that of Śaṅkara are quite distinct, and that therefore Śaṅkara is at liberty to refute the Buddhist arguments without abandoning his own central doctrine. Śaṅkara and the Buddhists agree in universal mental reference, i.e. in saying that everything is in mind. But by 'mind' the Buddhists mean only a transient act of perception. The world is nothing but a series of such acts. Śaṅkara is therefore quite at liberty to say that something more exists than these acts taken independently of the individual minds that perform them. This does not at all prevent his holding still to the position that all acts of perception are dependent on a knowing subject. The defence of Śaṅkara which is undertaken by Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan thus depends on the identification of *phenomenal* and *illusory*, i.e. upon maintaining the position that all that Śaṅkara meant by his theory of illusion was to assert the phenomenal character of the ordinary experience, to emphasize its essential dependence on the knowing mind. His criticism of the Buddhistic position is directed against the atomist character of the Buddhist sensationalism, and against nothing else. His own position is quite different, and he can therefore maintain it along with the criticism.

Much the same line is taken by Max Müller, who vigorously asserts what might be called the normal character of Śaṅkara's idealism, and would identify

it almost with the relation of the phenomenal and the noumenal which we find in Kant's philosophy. Max Müller points out that 'the Vedāntist distinguished carefully between what is phenomenal and what is false or nothing. There is a reality behind the phenomenal world. It is not a mere nothing, as some Buddhist philosophers hold, nor is it altogether illusive, as some of the later Vedāntists thought. . . . The substantial reality of the world is not denied, for that rests on Brahman; but all that we see and hear by our limited senses, all that we perceive and conceive and name is purely phenomenal, as we say, is the result of *avidyā*, as the Vedantists say. This does not mean that the phenomenal world is altogether nothing—no, it is always the effect of which Brahman is the cause, and, as there cannot be any substantial difference between cause and effect, the phenomenal world is ultimately as real as Brahman—nay, in its ultimate reality, is Brahman itself.' [1]

This facile identification of the phenomenal with the results of *avidyā* is also evident in the writings of those who would find fundamental resemblances between the Vedānta and the philosophy of Bishop Berkeley. In his denial of the existence of matter the Irish bishop is claimed as a supporter of the main principles of the Vedānta. What difference, it is asked, is there, between the illusion theory of Śaṅkara and the theory which reduces all reality to a system of ideas in the mind of God? There is one difference between Śaṅkara's system and Berkeley's which will be alluded to a little further on. Berkeley acknowledged the real existence of other selves besides the one Self, whereas the Vedānta acknowledges the existence of one Self only. Indeed, those who otherwise press the resemblance between

[1] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 87.

Śaṅkara and Berkeley are ready to point out that in this respect the illumination of the former was greater than that of the latter. But the fundamental difference is that Berkeley does not wield the weapon of illusion with nearly so wide a sweep as Śaṅkara does. Berkeley has indeed discarded the doctrine of the independent reality of external things, but this certainly does not mean that they have no reality of any kind or that the system in which they find a place is, as a whole, to be regarded as an illusion. It is a system of signs—a language expressive, in a fixed and orderly manner, of the mind of God. It is a system which is intelligible throughout, in which every part has meaning in relation to the whole.

It is here that we reach the essential distinction between the idealistic Vedānta and the Western philosophies with which it is identified by Max Müller, Pundit Tattvabhushan, and others. The Western philosophies which point out that the things of ordinary experience are phenomenal do not thereby divest them of meaning and regard them as irrational when taken from the highest point of view. They do not regard them as undesirable from the point of view of value or as fundamentally a mistake from the point of view of truth. But this is just what we find in Śaṅkara, with his doctrine of illusory attribution. With him, the charge of unreality is pressed much further back than in what might be called the phenomenalism of much Western philosophy. For Śaṅkara the world is a gigantic product of ignorance, of Nescience, and this product can be dealt with only by negation and not by interpretation. For this reason, Śaṅkara is not at liberty, as Berkeley is, to distinguish between those experiences of ours which are given their true place in a rational system and those which

are not so correctly placed, and to call the one group perceptions and the other group dream-images. There is, for Śaṅkara, no potential rationality, no system, securely founded in the mind of the Absolute and interpretable by the piecing together of our particular experiences. Defenders of the Vedānta philosophy are fond, as we have seen, of calling Kant to their aid and pointing out that the Vedāntic distinction between phenomenal and transcendental knowledge is just the same as his. But though there may be a surface similarity, we must remember that Kant has never definitely swept away the phenomenal into the realm of illusion. By implication at least the phenomenal has value as leading to the *Ding-an-sich*.

In general it may be said that if you have already admitted that the deliverances of consciousness as regards the external world are, as a whole, of a dream-like character, you cannot, within this total experience, distinguish between perceptions of an external world and dream-images. It is, to say the least of it, somewhat naïve to say that we must believe in the existence of an external world because we are conscious of the objects it contains. And the giving of reality to our waking experiences is all the more difficult in a system in which the general tendency is towards the recognition of dreams as of higher value than ordinary waking experience. We have already seen that in what might be called the *via religiosa* of the Vedānta—or the description of the stages by which we may rise to identification with the divine reality—the state of dream-consciousness is put higher than the state of waking consciousness. Śaṅkara himself shows a sense of inconsistency when he discusses the question how real effects can be produced by unreal causes. In illustration he points out how death sometimes

takes place from imaginary venom, and how the auspicious or inauspicious omens of a dream may influence the whole life. In this contention, however, Śaṅkara seems to forget that the real effect—as he for temporary purposes calls it—is produced, not by the dream, but by continuing attribution of real meaning to the dream, and this persistence of meaning is possible only by an interpretation of ordinary experience which Śaṅkara in general would not allow. The same criticism would apply to Śaṅkara's view of reality as 'prophetic.'

Mr. Gough tries to get Śaṅkara out of his difficulties as regards universal illusion by urging that 'in the Upanishads external things are as real as the minds that perceive them. This degree of reality they have, and the perceptions of a dream have not.' It is difficult to see in this connection what is meant by 'the reality of the minds that perceive them.' It would undoubtedly be convenient for Śaṅkara if such reality of perceiving minds could be occasionally admitted. It relieves him of the embarrassment of explaining how the percipient of an illusion can be himself an illusion, or, more generally, of showing how the sceptic can 'throw his opponent if his own feet are in the air.' But in his more consistent moments Śaṅkara would not admit the reality of any plurality of minds whatsoever, still less would he admit their reality when engaged in the unphilosophical occupation of perceiving what he calls the fact of ordinary experience.

In short, the position of Śaṅkara in reference to the Buddhists does not bear defence. He has not satisfactorily delivered us from their sensationalism, with its depressing conclusion as to the impermanent nature of our concrete experience and the resultant forlorn feeling of wandering in a world of dreams.

Nor is the matter greatly helped by the further defence offered by Mr. Gough, which he bases upon the distinction between two orders of knowledge to which we have already briefly alluded. Just after the passage above quoted he goes on to say: 'Individual souls and their environments are true for the many. . . . They are real from the standpoint of ordinary experience. The visions of a dream are false from this standpoint. Individual souls and their environment are false for the reflective few. Their existence disappears in the higher existence—they are unreal from the standpoint of metaphysical truth.'[1] Now to distinguish between the popular and scientific point of view is quite legitimate, but Mr. Gough seems to be making an illegitimate use of this distinction. He is trying to reconcile two different points of view by assigning them to two different classes of people. But, as a matter of fact the 'reflective few,' as he calls them, equally with the popular crowd, would have made the distinction between dream-images and waking perceptions, and in so doing would have treated the latter as real. In fact, it is surely reasonable to think that in conducting a controversy with the Buddhists Śaṅkara would have had a 'reflective few' in mind, and that it is to such a group of competent judges he would have made the appeal that they should examine their own experience and see whether they did not make this distinction between dream-images and waking perceptions, holding the latter as real and as corresponding to objective actualities. They are asked to agree with his own assertion that 'the consciousness itself certifies to us that the thing is external to the consciousness.' But these same 'reflective few' are now to be asked to go back upon their former judgment and describe

[1] *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 197.

even these waking experiences as of a dream-like character; in other words, the same experiences are to be described *by the same people* as both real and unreal.

It may indeed be argued that these experiences are to be admitted as real only for the purposes of contrast with the dream-images, and that there is nothing to prevent our holding that the whole system of which they are a part is illusory. Now, in the course of an ordinary dream, we may, no doubt, distinguish between imaginary occurrences and those which we take to be real experience, i.e. we may distinguish a dream within a dream. But we do not, when we have awakened, or when we have realized that the whole is a dream, continue to make the former distinction. The point of the distinction is that there is some reality in which or in regard to which the distinction is made. We could not separate the parts of a spider's web if there were no parts to divide. If the whole is discovered to be a dream, what we formerly in the course of the dream held to be imaginary experiences and what we held to be real experiences alike fall down to the same monotonous level of unreality. If we, by the aid of Śaṅkara's teaching, reach the stage of enlightenment at which we discover that the whole of life is a dream, we cannot continue to distinguish degrees within that dream. If, on the other hand, we continue to hold that the partial experiences—usually called waking experiences—are real, we cannot regard the inclusive whole as altogether unreal. If it is said that by calling these waking experiences real all that is meant is that we put them in their proper place in reference to the whole, we might ask what more is meant by reality than this relation of things to one another in a coherent system. If Śaṅkara grants us this, he would grant us practically all that

is required. But such an escape from his dilemma is not possible for Śaṅkara for the reasons we have already adduced in discussing the similarity or dissimilarity of his system to the theories of Western philosophers. In short, we remain firmly fixed in the dilemma of having to say either that our total experience is a dream, in which case no part of it can have any reality, or that certain parts of it have reality, in which case it cannot, as a whole, be a dream.

The distinction which Śaṅkara and his supporters make between two orders of knowledge is by no means an unusual one. The distinction between empirical (*vyāvahārika*) and transcendental (*pāramārthika*) reality reappears again and again in Indian philosophy. Traces of it are found later in the 'illusory attribution' of the *Vedānta Sāra*.

Escape to the transcendental level is accepted somewhat too readily and too frequently as a solution of the difficulties of the empirical. We come across, e.g., such a passage as this in a recent book on Indian philosophy: 'The continuance of the perception of the world is in no way inconsistent with the knowledge that, on ultimate analysis, the world as an entity distinct from Brahman is found to have no reality at all.'[1] Now, if by the denial of the world as a distinct entity we mean the denial of the particularity of the world, then 'the continuance of the perception of the world' may not be inconsistent with such a doctrine, but the continuance of the belief that such perception represents any reality is certainly inconsistent. If you say that no external reality exists, you cannot say that our perception represents it, and yet an implicit assertion of this kind seems to be involved in the suggestion of the continuance of the perception of the world, if this

[1] Cf. *Philosophy of the Vedānta*, by P. L. Sen, p. 109.

perception is not to be without meaning. Unless we are to destroy altogether the distinction between perception and imagination we cannot continue to perceive while all the time we are convinced there are no objects of our perception.

We may ask the question whether we are on safe ground even with such a distinction as Deussen makes in the following sentence: 'The identity of the highest and the individual Ātman, though perfectly true from the metaphysical standpoint, remains incomprehensible from the empirical point of view.'[1] Is there not here a tendency to confuse the comprehensible with the unworthy, and to transform the idea of a graded process of knowledge, through the various stages of which we pass under the guidance of the desire for truth, into the distinction between two orders of knowledge with very little continuity between them? If we find that anything is incomprehensible from the ordinary empirical point of view, this is not a sufficient reason for denying all value to empirical doctrines. It only moves us to regard them as somewhat inadequate. The reason for preferring the higher knowledge to the lower lies in the assumption that the former is more complete than the latter. It certainly does not lie in the contention that what has been proved to be true as a fact on the lower level may be regarded as untrue on the higher. If we hold to this doctrine of discontinuity, we are immediately face to face with the question, 'By what authority' do we prefer the higher to the lower? Why do we choose in this arbitrary manner one out of two incompatible points of view?

A satisfactory answer to this question can be given only by showing that the higher completes the lower and brings out the full truth of the latter.

[1] *Outlines*, p. 27.

Our authority lies in greater fullness and comprehensiveness, but this is an altogether different kind of distinction from that which is latent in the doctrine of two kinds of knowledge. To choose simply between two distinct orders of knowledge would seem to be almost as meaningless as to prefer one end of the pendulum's swing to the other. We find reason for our choice only in the consideration that the view we decide upon is more adequate than the view we reject, and the minimum of condition which we require for choice is that the view chosen should have at least as much relation to the view rejected as will admit of comparison—we cannot compare things in two altogether distinct universes.

Thus this defence of the abstract Vedāntist position turns out to be as unsatisfactory as other defences, and the reason of this and other failures is that the Vedāntists are attempting to satisfy two contradictory demands. For religious and ethical purposes, i.e. in order to provide a way of deliverance and salvation, they assert the dream-like character of ordinary experience; but at the same time, in order to keep up at least an appearance of harmony with this experience, and in order to distinguish their position from the extreme consequences which had seemed to the Buddhists to be deducible from it, they attempt to distinguish degrees within this dream, and graciously permit all except the few who possess pre-eminent philosophical qualifications to accept certain portions of the dream as real. The dilemma in which they find themselves is certainly a serious one. When attention is concentrated on the negative movement of the soul, a breach seems to be forced with existence as a whole and with the way in which things happen in the world. The construction of the theory of *māyā* is the philosophical symbol of the consciousness of this breach,

and if this doctrine, which we have seen finds considerable support in the Upanishads, could be carried through, a way of escape and deliverance would be provided, though perhaps at excessive cost. But, as we have also seen, the Vedāntist is himself uncomfortable because of the distance he has travelled away from ordinary experience, and is especially troubled by the identification of his teaching with the Buddhist theories. He therefore attempts to give some reality to ordinary experience, but in so doing he closes the only way of deliverance which he has hitherto held open. He had depended for salvation upon the negation of ordinary experience, but he now finds that, after he has made certain concessions to it, it refuses to be negated. He realizes that in his negative procedure towards spiritual deliverance he has attempted an impossible task. He has stripped life of its content and has given up the power of 'penetration and organization of reality,' or, at least, of the reality of ordinary experience, and when he comes back to it again, as sooner or later he must come back, this ordinary reality presents itself to him as an unintelligible mass out of touch with the reality which in the course of his philosophic searching he has accustomed himself to regard as central or even exclusive. If, further, he takes up the burden of the ordinary again, and attempts to organize his experience, he finds that his means of deliverance are gone. He is now so firmly caught in the toils of the world which is ordinarily called fact that it seems presumptuous to call it illusion—nothing remains but to accept it in all its meaninglessness.

Thus in confusion and darkness of mind the Vedāntist stands between two worlds. If he is swayed by the desire for deliverance he must assert the unreality of the world. If he still retains a

respect for ordinary experience, he must give up his hope of deliverance. So his philosophy can satisfy neither the mystic who looks to it for deliverance nor the ordinary man who demands that his experience should not be regarded as altogether futile. Dissatisfaction seems to be the only possible result of this want of clearness and consistency. We cannot live in two unconnected worlds, and our demand for unity and connection between them remains unrealized. Scepticism and uncertainty seem to be the main results of the occasional disturbance of ordinary experience which is all the Vedānta has to offer in solution of the world-problems. This solution is beyond the reach of the majority of men, and is possible for the enlightened only in rare moments of ecstasy, if even then. When we come down to the level of the ordinary we find that we have still to grope our way, and that the obstacles are more numerous than before because our eyes have been dazzled by a light which has broken in upon our ordinary consciousness with startling abruptness and has been as abruptly withdrawn. In his commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtras*, ii. 1. 14, Śaṅkara himself invites us to judge his system by its results: 'Moreover, while the cognition of the unity of Brahman is the instrument of final release, there is nothing to show that any result comes from viewing Brahman as capable of modification and passing over into the forms of the world.' We accept the challenge as offered by Śaṅkara and the test which he suggests, and we are inclined to think that the results of the test are just the opposite of his expectation, and that the solution must be found in the discovery, not of the abstract Universal which he favours, but of the concrete Universal which he rejects. The way of salvation lies not in flight but in transformation.

CHAPTER X

FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE ABSTRACT CHARACTER OF THE RESULTS: THE RELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIP INVOLVED

A LITTLE more may be said about the barrenness of the results. We could have endured the inadequacy of the abstract interpretation of the Upanishad teaching in its simultaneous attempts to reconcile itself with ordinary experience and provide a deliverance from the difficulties of that experience, if, in the transcendental sphere to which it attempts to escape, something had been offered us of a positive and satisfying character. Its goal is God, but who or what is this God it would reach? The predicates *sat-chit-ānanda* would seem to represent an ideal of comparative fullness—a reality in which we might rest metaphysically and religiously. We might be satisfied indeed with these predicates if they were used in the sense usually assigned to them; but, as we have seen, the predicates turn out to be almost wholly negative. The *Being* is a mystical combination of being and non-being. It is a denial of being in any empirical sense and an assertion of it in some vague transcendental sense which removes it from the reach of human comprehension and aspiration. It is the same with the other predicates. The *intellect* which God is said to possess is in no way akin to ours, with all its categories and forms.

He is the abstract unity of thought. As Śaṅkara says of a passage in the *Taittirīya Upanishad*: 'Knowledge is here an abstract indicating cognition, and not the cognitive subject.' Again, in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, vii., Brahman is said to be 'neither internally nor externally cognitive, neither conscious nor unconscious.' To be conscious would involve dualism, and against all suspicion of dualism we must resolutely guard. Even the intuition wherewith we may be permitted to grasp the Ultimate seems impossible, for no knowing mind is left in which the intuition may become actual. The *bliss* also which is ascribed to God and which may be ours in union with Him, contains none of the elements of human happiness. It is the negation of this, and can be described only by comparison with dreamless sleep. Deussen thus sums up the emptiness of the threefold concept: 'The being of the ātman is no being as revealed in experience, and in an empirical sense is rather a not-being; and, similarly, the "thought" is only the negation of all objective being, and the "bliss" is the negation of all suffering, as this exists in dreamless sleep.' [1]

Brahman, then, remains entirely unknowable, independent of the conditions of time, space, and causality, describable only by contradictory predicates or by forms which entirely lose their ordinary meaning when applied to him. We find that we have turned away from the world of experience for the sake of a negation. God is unattainable, and this is just what might have been expected in view of the fact that we have denied the world from which we might argue towards Him, and have denied also the very existence of ourselves who might sustain the argument or be capable of making the necessary abstraction. In this unattainability there is surely

[1] *Upanishads*, p. 404.

a source of pessimism, especially when it is realized that there is very little to distinguish the position, as an Indian writer says, 'from the absolute nihilism of Buddha and his followers.' The 'nothing' and the 'all' are indeed very close together. It is true that Faust can say,'In deinem Nichts hoff' ich das All zu finden,' but if we were to describe the more normal attitude of the human consciousness we should have to transform these words into 'In deinem All fürcht' ich das Nichts zu finden.'

There is, of course, much that is admirable in this confession of failure to attain to a knowledge of God. The spirit, e.g., of the *Kena Upanishad*, which belongs to the completed period of Vedāntic conception, is one with which, in many respects, it is possible to be in full sympathy. There is constantly the effort to emphasize the point that Brahman is beyond the ordinary categories of knowledge and that if we think we may worship him as if he were an ordinary object of consciousness, our worship will be illusory. 'Only he who does not know it, knows it. It is not known by him who knows it, but is known by him who knows it not.'[1] The more favourable interpretation of this passage would be to take it as an expression of humility. It cannot be demanded of any philosophy that it should provide a means of knowing God by the ordinary means of knowing. We must also admit that the knowledge of God, if it is to be gained at all, can be gained only by long and diligent search. And we must recognize the need of the divine help throughout. We must admit that, even in the end, God cannot be completely known—that He must remain beyond the conscious grasp of the human mind. But it is possible—and the possibility becomes actual in the Vedānta—to make too much

[1] Cf. ii. 1 and ii. 11.

of the difficulty of the search, to transform the unknown into the unknowable, to despair of certainty and to conceive of God as altogether out of relation to human faculties. We must not allow humility to pass into timorousness. We may justly object to crude anthropomorphism, but this surely does not mean that God is out of relation to our personality altogether, and that human conceptions are unable to make any approach towards an understanding of His being. There is all the difference in the world between ascribing to God a definite personality exactly like the human and interpreting Him *through* our personality. The former is anthropomorphism, and may or may not be legitimate; the latter is certainly not anthropomorphism, and is surely as certainly legitimate. Further, does the insufficiency of our conceptions prove their utter unreliability? Are we to give up all claim to certainty? Is there no truth in Eucken's claim that religious certainty may be the highest kind of certainty? 'We maintain,' he says, 'that it is a very poor conception of religion which deems any certainty superior to hers, and does not claim for her truth a far more primary certainty than that of the formula $2 \times 2 = 4$.'[1] And Bradley agrees with him: 'We can see at once that there is nothing more real than what comes in religion. To compare facts such as these with what comes to us in outward existence would be to trifle with the subject. The man who demands a reality more solid than that of the religious consciousness knows not what he seeks.'[2]

The philosophy of the Upanishads would, on the whole, deny this claim to certainty in the religious sphere, and, in so doing, it paves the way to

[1] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 29.
[2] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 449.

pessimism. To remove God so far from human thought, to leave us with such barren results of all our searching, is to condemn us to hopelessness. It is more—it is to deprive us of a divine defence in our struggle with ordinary experience in all its unintelligibility. It is to prepare the way for a reaction towards emotionalism and anti-intellectualism. The consideration of the possibility of such a reaction leads us to add one or two remarks on the abstract character of the intellectual procedure of the Upanishads. This may explain to some extent how the intellectualism could not carry the remedy of its insufficiency within itself and by natural expansion meet some of the needs of human nature which in its first form it altogether ignored.

The procedure was dominated by the idea that all determination was negation. It was akin to the type of thought which in formal logic would, first of all, abstract the term from the sentence in which it occurs and would then group all the terms together under the most general description. Śaṅkara definitely objects to entertaining the possibility of the *saguṇa* aspect of God on the ground that a concept of this amount of definiteness would exclude too much. The ideal of the abstract universe holds the field, and all endeavours are directed towards finding the predicate which may be applied to the greatest possible number of subjects. One by one the determinate qualities are thrown away, like the peeled-off coats of an onion, until you arrive at the centre of all. Perhaps the centre may be dangerously like nothing, for, as has been truly said, ' If there is nothing but absoluteness, there is nothing at all,' but such a result is not your fault—your procedure has been correct. This procedure, it is to be noticed, has been ruled throughout by contempt

for the intermediate stages. There is no effort to show that these find their place in a more comprehensive idea. They are simply left behind as *untruths*. There is no attempt to look upon the particular as important or as a trustee for the whole. Negation is triumphant, the content and structure of the world must be dissolved—the ideal is absorption. Put logically, the underlying assumption is that we reach the infinite by denying the finite, which practically involves the further assumption that ' merely not to be in the finite world is logically and *per se* a presumable gain.' [1]

From a slightly different point of view, we might be said to reconcile ourselves to the universe by reducing both ourselves and the universe to nothingness. It is doubtful, however, whether two emptinesses can supply us with anything in the nature of a reconciliation.

We have just been employing metaphors which are decidedly spatial in their implication, and this suggests the idea that the tendency underlying the abstract procedure of the Vedānta, which we have criticized because of its exclusive intellectualism, may turn out really to be a degradation of the intellect. For this reason the intellect may be unable to reach out towards and supplement itself by other forms of human nature. By the word ' degradation ' we mean to indicate that the intellect, instead of relying upon its own peculiar characteristics, falls back upon conceptions which belong to the region of biology, and even of physics. Though Bergson draws from the consideration of such a point as this much wider conclusions as to the general function of the intellect, there is much of truth in his contention that pure and empty unity is met with only in space, and is really the

[1] Bosanquet, *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 255.

unity of a mathematical point; and that, generally, what is psychical cannot be crushed under a spatial figure. He argues that the intellect is therefore to be regarded as generally impotent, but the legitimate argument seems to be only to the inadequacy of a narrow use of the intellect, and by narrow we have here specially in view an abstract use. We are led on by our love of abstraction and helped by our use of spatial metaphors. We conceive of the world as a vast plain which can gradually be emptied of objects, and when we attempt to put our thoughts alongside this emptiness we reach the same vacuity of thought. The point is well put by Bosanquet: 'There is a natural tendency . . . to interpret inwardness as the co-ordinate contrary of externality. The inward thus conceived drops from the inclusive concrete to the exclusive abstract. The mere inner, Hegel will always tell us, is the mere outer. . . . Individuality, instead of being the fullness of life and content, becomes a holy of holies which, if it could be entered, would prove an empty shrine.[1]

The degradation of the intellect in its application to ultimate Being has sometimes taken another form. It has led to the substitution of what Crozier calls the Soul, or vital principle, for the Intelligence as the First Cause of all things. We come dangerously near a vague conception of universal life and of salvation as consisting in physical participation in this. As Crozier puts it, 'The vital principle, the *Anima Mundi*, which is the life of Nature, is the supreme principle to which all else pays homage; the Intellect being regarded as but an evanescent foam-bubble thrown up to the surface of its deep and ever-flowing stream.'[2]

We do not mean to suggest that this sacrifice of

[1] *Individuality and Value*, p. 75.
[2] *History of Intellectual Development*, p. 5.

the intellect is conscious, but we regard it as an almost inevitable rebound from the negative movement of thought. Disappearance in empty immensity, absorption in a central physical life, is what we arrive at. 'As the tide returns to the ocean, as the bubbles burst in the water, as the snowflake mingles in the stream, so will all things finally be lost in the universe of being. Creator and creation are sleep *plus* a dream. The dream shall vanish, but the sleep shall remain. Individual life will mingle in that shoreless ocean of being, that *abyssal* infinite which no intellect can comprehend and even Vedic language fails to describe, the eternal and unchangeable Brahman.' [1]

Thus the abstract procedure lands us in what might almost be called physical emptiness. It fails to satisfy, and, just because the procedure is abstract, the thought employed does not itself supply a remedy. We need not dilate further upon failure to satisfy—that has already been sufficiently indicated in the quotation from Dr. Thibaut given above (v. p. 78), and is a matter of common knowledge to any one who has the slightest acquaintance with average religious thought in India. What we have to notice here especially is that the intellectual conceptions are so barren that satisfaction has to be sought in reaction from them and not in development of them. From mere emptiness no satisfaction can be obtained. A beautiful account of the change of view-point is given by the Rev. P. C. Majumdar in his book on *The Rise and Progress of the Brahmo-Samaj*: 'Such a contemplative union is not suitable to all alike. There is another order of mind amongst the people of this country. The emotional element in the Hindu heart is very strong and very tender. Among the higher classes the intellect may be subtle,

[1] Hunt, *Pantheism*, p. 19.

habits well regulated, and the heart fortified for flights of thought and rigours of abstraction. . . . But the great heart of the nation throbs with intense feeling. The warm love of Hari glowed in the heart of Nārada as that saintly rishi, white with age, sang and played on his *vina*. The boy Prahlāda, a king's son, and destined to fill a throne, shed many tears over Hari's beloved name, and suffered persecution, the recital of which, in popular ballads, still makes many eyes wet. It is said that Vyāsa, after he had written the great poem of the *Mahābhārata*, felt restless in his mind, and, with the object of obtaining the peace which he so much needed, spoke with Nārada: "Thou hast written of wisdom, Vyāsa, and of the merit of works; thou hast taught men of the things of the world. This cannot give thee joy and peace. Speak, O Vyāsa, of the love of God, and thy heart will be at rest." The great bard accordingly discoursed of the sweetness of *bhakti*, and his spirit departed in gladness and tranquillity to the mansions of the blessed.'

Yet this pleasing picture does not represent the whole tendency. There are extremes of reaction which are easily reached on the rebound from the abstract ideal, and a connection is made with lower phases of experience on perhaps a merely physical level. The way is at least prepared for a religion of mere emotion—for the *bhakti* cults which play so large a part in Indian religion. In its exclusive devotion to empty abstractions the intellect has abandoned its control. The fault is, now, not that abstract Pantheism is too intellectual, but that it hardly continues to be intellectual enough. The guiding intellectual impulse of the soul abandons its task, and, in the reaction, the house of the soul is filled with phantasies and extravagances of arbitrary and unrestrained construction. Intellectualism

leads to its own destruction and gives place to a vague emotionalism with little ethical or intellectual content.

But there is another consequence. This independent feeling is also uncontrolled feeling. The emptiness of the intellectual result involves, as we have seen, a tendency towards the merely physical. Thus it comes about that imagination, uncontrolled by the higher powers of the intellect, invents objects of worship in a purely arbitrary fashion, and is apt to borrow materials for the representation of the divine from carnal rather than from spiritual experiences. Here we have the explanation of the confused welter of polytheism in Indian religions with its attendant belief in magic and material sacrifice. We shall have to consider this more fully in a later chapter. At first sight it might seem to be utterly alien to the pure intellectualism of the philosophical system, but is easily understood when regarded as a reaction from an intellectualism which has proved to be empty. It is the rushing to an opposite extreme of those who are fascinated by the glamour of pantheism and understand not its risks. It may be felt that when the phenomenal is altogether illusory it does not matter how we deal with it. Theoretically the swing of the pendulum is from a disdainful idealism to a facile naturalism: practically it is from asceticism to indulgence. We pass onwards through the stages of a sane naturalism to revel in particularity and multiply gods for the satisfaction of every wandering imagination and every sense. We have lost the sense of the need for authority and are forgetful of the fact that 'what does not command, can never save.' We think that we may become sentimentalists in religion without let or hindrance, and sentimentalists have been defined by Meredith as 'they who seek to enjoy without

incurring the immense debtorship for a thing done.' Perhaps there is also a relevant truth in another saying of Meredith's—'When a wise man makes a false step, will he not go further than a fool?'[1] The false step of the wise man here is the error of abstract procedure. This brings dissatisfaction, which again attempts to remedy itself by satisfactions of a lower order. This merely emotional satisfaction may be self-sufficing, but the sufficiency is not permanent, and a second dissatisfaction emerges. The higher minds in India do not and cannot find satisfaction in polytheism, with its disregard of their more spiritual nature. And yet they cannot find a remedy in a repeated assertion of the abstract ideal. Relief lies rather in reconstruction of that ideal in accordance with hints which we may derive from their own teaching—hints of a higher function for the intellect than that of mere abstraction, and a widening of its range which will bring it into relation with the completeness of human nature.

It must be freely admitted by Indian thinkers that one of their own number is right when he says that 'the cultivation of the critical and logical faculties has been exalted into undue eminence,' and that this cultivation is the cause of the 'subtleties and abstractions of which the national writings are full.'[2] We must press home upon Indian thought the ideal of another Indian writer: 'Knowledge is not mere intellectual, inferential knowledge, but a state of lasting enlightenment, a never-failing light illumining all departments of conscious life—colouring the sensuous perceptions, guiding the judgments, touching the feelings, controlling the desires, and determining the decisions of the conscience.'[3] We must

[1] Cf. Rom. i. 22: 'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.'

[2] Majumdar, *Brahmo Samaj*, p. 136.

[3] Tattvabhushan, *Hindu Theism*, p. 115.

retain this guiding and comprehensive function of the intellect if it is to win its true place in the human economy. It must control the feelings instead of abandoning them to their own impulsive force. It must also be in closest connection with character—'incur the immense debtorship for a thing done.' It should be in harmony with the conception of knowledge which a recent great scholar has ascribed to Socrates—there must be 'a certain overmastering power which lays hold primarily of the intellect, but through the intellect of the entire personality, moulding and disciplining the will and the emotions into absolute unity with itself, a principle from which courage, temperance, justice, and all the virtues inevitably flow.'[1]

We cannot reach such an ideal for the active intellect by any emphasis upon mere identity between the individual and the universal, especially if the inner nature of both the individual and the universal is regarded as unknown and unknowable. It is impossible to bring about a reconciliation by mere force of emptiness. The universal must be regarded as concrete, and so must the individual, and some relation of reciprocity must be established between them, so that the activity of the individual be not maimed and an ideal provided towards which its aspirations may ascend. It will become apparent, we think, that a properly religious relationship, which alone can give abiding satisfaction, cannot be established on a basis of mere identity; and, if this is so, such a consideration will serve to emphasize the inadequacy of the abstract procedure which has resulted in the assertion of such an identity, and it will also make clear the latent pessimistic consequences. Does the metaphysic we are considering provide any means of permanent religious

[1] Adams, *Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 329.

satisfaction, or does it only provide the possibility of a reaction in the course of which a certain kind of satisfaction may indeed be found but certainly not a satisfaction which endures ?

The question of the religious effect of the Vedānta philosophy and of the effect of the religious relationship established upon the general view of life, is perhaps one that does not admit of separate treatment. In any Indian philosophy it is difficult to separate the religious effect from the intellectual effect, as an intellectualistic attitude to religion is so exceedingly common. On account of this identification we do not treat here of certain aspects of the religious question, and other aspects may be considered perhaps more profitably under the heading of practical effects. And it must be remembered that, in criticizing the metaphysical inadequacy, we have already implicitly criticized the religious effect which that system was intended to have.

There are some, indeed, who say that the Vedānta was never intended to be a religion. Worsley, e.g., argues that it is a mistake to criticize it on the ground that it does not support religious values. He accepts without surprise the fact that Indian philosophic religions have made but few converts outside India. He explains this by indicating that the Indian teachers do not seek to make converts, for the reason that in India religion is really a philosophy, and 'philosophy is not for the bulk of humanity, but for the chosen few.' Moreover, 'Hindu philosophy demands such abstruse and subtle phases of thought that the number of persons able to follow the doctrines and grasp them thoroughly must always remain limited.' [1] Now, we may discover, and, to a certain extent, have already discovered, that the

[1] *Concepts of Monism*, p. 168.

identification of the religious and the philosophical points of view is one of the causes of the inadequate effect which the system as a whole produces. But the preponderance of the philosophy over the religion does not destroy the fact of the identification in the minds of the adherents of the system, nor does it enable us to say that in intention, at least, the system was not religiously directed. Failure to produce an effect (because of false identification) is not the same as want of intention to produce it, and, where there is intention, there is subject-matter for examination. The whole attitude of the Vedānta constitutes an attempt to do the work of a religion by means of a philosophy, and, even if the means turn out to be inadequate, this does not alter the character of the end aimed at. The straining after release from the empirical process and the yearning for union with the Divine is a religious impulse. Even Worsley describes Śaṅkara as an example of 'a great philosopher who fully grasped the necessity of religion to the world,' and surely it is right to say, with Max Müller, that 'what distinguishes the Vedānta philosophy from all other philosophies is that it is at the same time a religion and a philosophy.' We must notice, however, that the Vedāntist provision of other than philosophical satisfaction of the religious impulse is extremely meagre, and that, therefore, we are relieved from the necessity of any elaborate separate treatment of the religious effects.

We should consider, however, some of the dangers which lie in the merging of the religious in the philosophical point of view, and especially the danger of considering the religious relationship as one of *identity* merely. We have to ask whether the relation of identity can furnish a proper and adequate basis for religion. Concentrating upon this

identity relationship, we may admit freely, at the outset, that the identity idea is a very beautiful one and seems to give us an ideal of religious attainment. Absorption is a satisfying idea in many moods of mind, and amongst certain races appeals almost universally. Mysticism, which is based on this idea of absorption, has been called religion 'in its intensest form,' and is undoubtedly an element in every religion.

The conception of identity might be described as an attempt to represent metaphysically the emotional glow of success which should attend the consummation of religious communion. But, at the same time the metaphysical representation would seem unwarrantably to indicate that the emotion of attainment is permanent rather than recurrent. This point has been well put in a recent article in the *Quarterly Review*: 'Especially necessary is it to doubt and even to deny that the picture which modern writers present of the "Unitive life" as one of final attainment beyond struggle, is more than an expansion, to cover a whole period, of utterances which in their original meaning only extended to certain moments or elements in it, or at least to question whether the sense of perfect or permanent attainment was ever so complete with them (the mystics) as we are often asked to suppose.'[1] Identity, as a metaphysical concept, emphasizes completeness and permanence of attainment to a far greater extent than religious experience supports. It may represent ideally the emotional state which follows upon a proper statement of the religious relationship, but it is certainly not that relationship itself. It is by no means a sufficiently flexible conception to provide for the varieties of religious experience, neither does it indicate the conditions

[1] Leslie Johnston, in *Quarterly Review*, January 1913.

by which even the emotional consummation may be reached.

It is sometimes said that identity is the metaphysical idea at the basis of Christianity, and in particular that it is the basis of the Christian law of love. Deussen[1] takes this view. It may be doubted, however, whether identity might not be used to contradict rather than to reinforce the law of love. It might be argued, e.g., that, seeing that my brother and I are one, any furtherance of my own interest would be *ipso facto* the furtherance of my brother's interest; and the same line of argument might lead us to suppose that the satisfaction of our own—perhaps wayward—desires, would be at the same time the doing of the will of God. Thus the conception of identity seems hardly the implication of the Christian law of love in either the Godward or the manward reference of the latter.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the religious relationship must be one in which two terms persist, and that the unity which is aimed at must be a unity including difference and not a bare unity. If we cling to the idea of a bare unity, then the resulting conception is that of all-absorbing Divine activity and corresponding human passivity —or God becomes, on the other hand, merely an aspect of our own subjectivity. If, however, the religious relationship is to be a real one, it must be a relationship between two at least partially independent and distinguishable entities—between the human spirit on the one hand and some power, distinct though not alien, on the other—a relation which finds its expression in *worship*.

Certain phases of mysticism, with their tendency towards pantheistic identity, make worship altogether impossible and, generally, become untrue

[1] *Sechsig Upanishads*, p. x.

to the religious relationship. This is more obviously the case with the more emotional forms of identity religion, but even those in which the intellect and the will play a greater part are dominated by the same tendency. The underlying intellectual assumption is that we cannot properly know a thing unless we become identified with the object of our thought or perception. As R. C. Bose says in his *Hindu Philosophy* (p. 169), 'One of the universally admitted maxims of Hindu philosophy is that the mind assumes the form of what it perceives, and, therefore, necessarily becomes what it perceives.' The practical assumption is that the volitional ideal is the overpowering of the human will by the divine rather than an ideal of fullness of sympathy between the two. But if we are to maintain the religious life at its full strength, we cannot give up the doubleness of the relationship. Religion is a matter of companionship, and one of the companions is God and the other is our own self. 'Man is not a part but a counterpart of God,' as Leibniz said, and, as a more modern writer has put it, 'that a man may love God, it is necessary that there should be not only a God to be loved but a man to love Him.'[1] Something of the same idea seemed to be at the back of the mind of an Indian with whom the present writer had a discussion recently upon this very subject. 'Is it not better,' he said, 'to taste the sweetness of honey than to be honey?' On the basis of identity the fullness of worship and communion with the divine is destroyed.

There is a growing tendency in the philosophy of religion to resent the idea of an all-absorbing unity. While, at first sight, such an idea of overwhelming reality may seem to bring the Divine

[1] Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 245.

nearer, yet it is false to the method by which we normally construct our universe and provide a basis for the conception of the God whom we worship. In the construction of experience the activity of the individual is given a more and more important place, and consequently, in the result which is aimed at, this place must be conceived of as preserved, and opportunity must still be given for a genuine exercise of self-determination. Fatalism is a consequence which is never far away from Vedāntic identity, but fatalism fails entirely to give value to the feeling of effort or striving towards the ideal which seems to be a normal constituent of the religious consciousness.

If we emphasize so strongly the idea of one sole agent, then we may ask how the individual soul has power even to institute its return to God? Nay, we may go further and ask how such a separation from God ever took place as would explain the yearning after return. If we are already what we wish to be, the wish is superfluous, and, if we have indeed always been in possession of what we now conceive as desirable, the wish to possess could never have arisen. Why should we desire to *become* sons of God, if we already *are*? If to this it is replied that we indeed *are* the sons of God but not in the fullest sense, and if, on the lines of this defence, it is further contended that we have as yet mistakenly identified ourselves with the objects of the finite world and have to overcome this mistake, we may ask in reply, Whence came this false identification, and who made it, if there is only the one reality? The truth is that, if the principles of the Vedānta philosophy are correct, the religious consciousness, with its sense of separation from God and its desire to overcome this separation, would never have arisen. We have seen also that the ideal set forth

does not correspond to the natural consummation of human nature. We may sum up by saying that neither the origin nor the consummation of the religious consciousness is explicable unless we have two terms wherewith to constitute a real relationship.

The other tendency of Vedāntism, according to which emphasis is laid not so much upon our identification with God as upon the discovery of God within our own consciousness, is almost equally fatal to a proper religious relationship. We hear much of the universal subject. By retiring within our own consciousness and getting deeper than consciousness we find the identity of our own *ātman* with Brahman. In this case the subjective seems to absorb the objective. The transition to an all-inclusive consciousness is surprisingly easy in all disquisitions upon Vedāntic topics. Cf. such a sentence as the following: 'We have only to universalize our case and we are face to face with the problem in hand. Put God in the place of the mind and the objects of nature in place of the phenomena of the mind.'[1] Such a mode of expression is typical of much Indian thought. God is brought within the subject and the shut eyes of the mystic are symbolical of a whole universe of thought. But as Caird says in another connection, 'A God who is within and not without is no God at all. With the loss of the object must come also the loss of that subjective life for which the sacrifice is made. For the subject has no meaning except in relation to this objective world, and, as the Buddhist saw, its freedom from that world turns into its own extinction.'[2] It would certainly seem true in connection with the Vedānta also that if God cannot

[1] Tattvabhushan, *Hindu Theism*, p. 60.
[2] *Evolution of Religion*, i. 381.

be made in any sense an object, He cannot be worshipped and we lose the 'lift' of religious devotion. We cannot afford in the religious life to lose sight altogether of the conception of a 'power not ourselves'; we must go out beyond ourselves. And in this going forth beyond ourselves we can be satisfied only if the needs of every part of our being are satisfied. A mere abstraction is not enough. We can find the consolation and the strength which we require only in a spirit like our own. We can perfect our powers of intelligence and love only in contact with an Infinite who is also intelligence and love. In our study of the development of Indian religions we have traced the gradual merging, in philosophic thought at least, of the various deities in the conception of one all-embracing unity, but if in the process certain essential elements of the religious consciousness have been sacrificed, it is doubtful whether we have here a definite advance towards the religious ideal.

After all, it is impossible that our faith in God should be altogether of a different nature from our faith in man. To say that faith in the impersonal is higher than our faith in the personal is to contradict our ordinary attitude. A true religious relationship should heighten and complete our idea of the best human relationships. If we conceive God as other than personal, the probabilities are that we shall soon come to conceive of Him as something lower than personal—as mere substance or force.

The necessity for advance along the lines of a personal conception of God has been felt repeatedly within Hindu thought itself. There is ever and again a transition from the *nirguṇa* aspect of Brahman to the *saguṇa* aspect. Sometimes the import-

ance of the transition is minimized by the argument that the latter aspect is valued for practical purposes only. Max Müller emphasizes this point. 'They allow a qualified Brahman for all practical purposes, and, more particularly, for the purposes of worship, because in a state of worship the human mind requires a qualified and objective God, a God the Father or the Creator. Thus Brahman may be worshipped as Iśvara or Lord, as a conditional personal God, and yet be known in his substance high above all conditions and limits inherent in personality.'[1] Dr. Thibaut also points out the implicit consciousness of the religious inadequacy of the pure Vedānta position which may be traced within Indian thought itself: 'The only forms of the Vedāntic philosophy which can at any time have been popular are those in which the Brahman of the Upanishads has somehow transformed itself into a being between whom and the devotee there can exist a personal relation, love and faith on the part of man, justice tempered by mercy on the part of the divinity. The only books of widespread influence are such as the *Rāmāyana* of Tulsīdās, which lay no stress on the distinction between an absolute Brahman inaccessible to all human wants and sympathies and a shadowy Lord whose very conception depends on the illusory principle of *māyā*; but love to dwell on the delights of devotion to one all-wise and merciful ruler who is willing to lend a gracious ear to the supplication of the worshipper.'[2] In referring to Tulsīdās Dr. Thibaut has probably in view such a passage as the following, which is very typical of a general movement of religious thought: 'The saint gave me the fullest possible instruction, but the worship of the imper-

[1] *Lectures on the Vedānta*, p. 84.
[2] Thibaut, Introd., p. cxxvii.

sonal laid no hold upon my heart. Again I cried, bowing my head at his feet, "Tell me, holy Father, how to worship the incarnate. Devotion to Rama, O wisest of sages, is like the element of water, and my soul is, as it were, a fish—how can it exist without it? When I have seen my fill of the Lord, then I will listen to your sermon on the unembodied." Again the saint discoursed of the incomparable Hari, and, demolishing the dogma of the incarnation, expounded him as altogether passionless. But I rejected the theory of the abstract and with much obstinacy insisted upon his concrete manifestation. The religion of the impersonal did not satisfy me. I felt an overpowering devotion towards an incarnation of the Supreme.'[1] (The *Rāmāyana* of Tulsīdās.)

Thus in the utterances of the greatest of India's sages we have testimony to the fact that the religion of the impersonal does not satisfy. And satisfaction is sought in turning away from the principle of identity which is fundamental in the Vedānta. The Vedānta has failed to provide a satisfactory basis for the religious relationship, and in this failure lies one main reason for the pessimism of its results. It is not enough, as Max Müller seems to think it is, to provide a personally characterized God for practical purposes only. Religion demands absolute

[1] The experiences of a Hindu woman who recently became a convert to Christianity seem to illustrate this point. Becoming dissatisfied with idol-worship, she asked her father, whom she believed to be a religious man, what form of worship she might adopt instead of the conventional Hindu ritual. He told her to meditate upon God without using any symbols. She tried to follow his instructions, but found that the idea of God was empty of meaning for her, and she seemed to be meditating only on a blank. Again she took counsel with her father, who now told her that he perceived she had not reached the highest stage. He himself, he declared, needed no aids to realization of God, but he admitted that most people did. He advised her to try the Christian incarnation as being the holiest of all. She did so, found the satisfaction which the abstract ideal had failed to bring her, and was also by no means disposed to continue in the belief that there was a higher stage of entirely different character.

truth, and will not rest in a qualified God if the unqualified God is the ultimate truth. And if the properly enlightened man has to leave behind him all belief in the qualified Brahman, we may ask whether what he has thrown away is not of more value than what he has retained. Further, esoteric procedure in religious matters is not permanently possible—the enlightened man cannot keep his beliefs to himself. These abstract beliefs will filter down to the unenlightened and disturb their simple beliefs without providing any substitute. The unenlightened also will be dissatisfied with a God who exists only for practical purposes, or at least such a God will lose his authority over them. And, for all who come within the range of its influence, if the philosophy leave them only a vague consciousness of a being who is little better than a negation, their own souls will partake of the emptiness and dreariness of this negation, and the extreme consequences deduced by the Buddhist are not far off. In any case we are left helpless before the sweep of forces which—empirical though they may be—still continue to exert their influence upon us. Without a truly religious deliverance operating with the authority of ultimate reality within the sphere of actual experience, we become bound once more in fetters from which we have no power to shake ourselves free. We cannot be satisfied with a religious relationship which, if it exists at all, is one of negation and passivity. As Eucken says, 'These utterances of Hindu conviction affect us by their simplicity and sincerity, but they set the whole theme of life in a lower key and they deprive it of all strong stimulus. Here there is no love rushing to the rescue. Each man takes the decisive step for himself alone. Consequently there is no world of inward life common to all men, no common

struggle against the irrationality of existence. With all this subjective susceptibility, this life as a whole is cold. It lacks all warmth of personality. Its strength lies far more in what it denies than in what it affirms.' [1]

[1] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 75.

CHAPTER XI

THE ETHICAL DOCTRINE OF THE VEDĀNTA AND ITS CONNECTION WITH PESSIMISM

Under this heading we may refer to two main subjects of discussion: (1) The Transcendence of Ethical Distinctions which is to be found in the Vedānta; (2) the Determinism and Conservatism of the Vedānta.

In our search for possible causes of the pessimism which we have found to be associated with the Pantheism of the Vedānta we have considered its metaphysical and religious inadequacy, and we have found the root of this to be in its excessive distrust of ordinary human experience and its excessive reliance upon a principle of abstract identity for the statement of the religious relationship. The result of these mistaken tendencies is to detach the religious solution, or attempt at solution, too much from the problems of the practical life. We do not seem to find any positive stimulus which will send us back again to our ordinary experience with strength to grapple with its problems, and to associate ourselves with our fellows for the furtherance of the good.

But if we are to escape pessimism, any philosophy which we adopt must either enable us to deny the claims of morality altogether or offer us some solution of the problems which arise within this sphere. No philosophy which claims to be a complete system

of thought can permanently avoid the demand that it shall take up a definite attitude towards ethical questions, that it shall provide us with a basis for certain judgments as to the relative value of the objects of human endeavour, and thus guide us in our relations to these objects. We must be allowed at least to call them good or bad and to direct our practical conduct accordingly, with a reasonable hope that such conduct will be effective in bringing us nearer to the goal which we seek to reach. For the purposes of this discussion we may take the Vedānta philosophy as typical of Indian philosophical thought, and we shall ask the question whether it enables us to make a truly ethical distinction between good and evil, whether it secures the permanence of the good and inspires us with longing for the attainment of it. We shall ask further whether it can create in us any belief that the effort to which we may be inspired is really possible for us, and, *if* possible, whether we can hope that any progress will be secured by means of it. In other words, we shall inquire whether the assertions that Vedāntism transcends moral distinctions, and is deterministic and conservative in its outlook on life, are justifiable.

As regards the first point, purification from evil would seem to be an immediate consequence of the generally negative attitude of this philosophy. 'Its strength lies rather in what it denies than in what it affirms.' But if this denial includes the denial of evil and of all wandering and degrading desires, surely we may expect an ethical system of the utmost purity, closely allied to mystical absorption, and leading to detachment from the very region of worldly temptation.

In many passages in the Upanishads we have straightforward assertions of freedom from evil.

In the *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (iv. 14. 3), e.g., we read 'As water does not cling to a lotus, so no evil deed clings to him who knows it'; and there is an uncompromising condemnation of evil deeds in the same Upanishad (v. 10. 9). Also in the *Īśā Upanishad* (v. 18) a simple yearning for moral purity is expressed, 'Keep us free from crooked evil, and we shall offer thee praise.' Moreover the stages in the ascetic life imply a gradual progress in the satisfaction of ethical demands and a growing self-renunciation. The doctrine of the 'sheaths' holds a prominent place in this philosophy, and the penetration of each of these in turn involves an ever fuller freedom from the illusions of human life in which so often temptation is concealed. Indeed we might, from one point of view, describe the prevailing spirit of the Upanishads in the strongly moral language in which Newman presents the ideal of religious detachment: 'To be detached is to be loosened from every tie which binds a soul to the earth, to be dependent on nothing sublunary, to lean on nothing temporal; it is to care nothing what other men choose to say or think of us or do; to go about our own work as soldiers go to battle, without a care for the consequences; to account credit, honour, name, easy circumstances, comfort, human affections, just nothing at all, when any religious obligation requires the sacrifice of them.'[1]

There are however certain characteristics of the Vedānta philosophy which cause us to doubt whether the second or more positive part of this quotation *can* be applied to describe the ideal of the Upanishads. Does this ideal inspire us 'to go about our work as soldiers go to battle, without a care for the consequences'? We may assume that 'being without a care for the consequences' means here

[1] *University Sketches*, p. 127.

disregard of personal risks, danger, and pain, and we may freely admit that the Vedānta does encourage such oblivion. But there are other consequences in regard to which we cannot be so careless if we wish to preserve our energy of action. Can we, e.g., go about our work if we have no sense of the value of work, and if we have failed to discover that this work leads to any valuable end, such as the victory of our cause, or, in the ethical life, a permanent triumph of the good, waited for and admitted by the scheme of reality? It is not sufficient to transcend the evil if we must transcend the good as well.

Now the Vedānta allows to works as a means of advancement towards ultimate truth only what is, on the whole, a subordinate place. Action of every sort is, in the *highest* life, to give place to contemplation, and no amount of action can produce the freedom which is aimed at. Thus, it becomes somewhat difficult to lay any strong emphasis upon the distinctions of the moral life, which is pre-eminently a life of action. And, as a matter of fact, we find several passages in the Upanishads which seem to teach the transcendence of both good and evil. The absorption at which we aim sweeps within the range of its negation both good and evil deeds, and the enlightened man need no longer have regard to moral rules. The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* tells us that 'the self becomes no greater by good works, no less by evil works.' The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (viii. 4) might have been quoted in support of the doctrine of the simple transcendence of evil, but, in the very same passage, we read 'The bridge of the Ātman is not crossed by day or night, age, death, or suffering, nor good works, nor bad works.' There is similar teaching in the *Taittirīya Upanishad* (ii. 9), 'The thought afflicts not him, what have I left undone, what evil done?' and also in the

Kaushītaki Upanishad (1. 4.) we read that 'when the enlightened man comes to the river Vijara, he there shakes off his good and evil deeds.' We may compare also the teaching of the third section of the same Upanishad. Good and bad works are no more the works of the enlightened man. He has transcended his individuality, and all that clings to individuality. His world is defiled by no works. 'He who knows me thus,' says Indra in this section, 'by no deed of his is his life harmed, not by the murder of his mother, not by the murder of his father, not by theft, not by the killing of a Brahman. If he is going to commit a sin the bloom does not depart from his face.' Something of the same disregard of the importance of all works, apart from the consideration of their ethical quality, reappears much later in Śaṅkara. 'That the knowledge of Brahman refers to something which is not a thing to be done and therefore is not concerned with the pursuit or avoidance of any object is the very thing we admit, for just that constitutes our glory, that as soon as we comprehend Brahman, all our duties come to an end and all our work is over.'[1] In general the teaching which is encouraged by the Vedānta is that we do not carry moral distinctions with us to the highest level, and Gough would seem to be accurate in saying that 'good works no less than evil works belong to the unreal, to the fictitious plurality of the world of semblances.'

A consideration of such passages as the one last quoted from the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* might seem to indicate that the Vedānta teaches freedom from good and evil in such a way as to involve positive encouragement to licence. Some Indian writers even have drawn out these consequences. The late Ram Chandra Bose, e.g., in his book on *Hindu*

[1] *Vedānta Sūtras*, Saṅkara's Comm. 1. 1. 4.

Philosophy, has described the Pantheism of the Vedānta as 'pan-diabolism,' and he speaks of it as follows: 'The system has proved a refuge of lies to many a hardened sinner. The perplexed minds which have found shelter in its solution of the problem of existence are few indeed, but the number of wicked hearts which have been composed to sleep by the opiate of its false hope is incalculable.'[1] This idea, however, that the system provides a positive encouragement of evil is an extreme conclusion and based too much upon isolated passages. On the other hand it does seem possible to say that the system is ethically defective, in a negative manner, in the sense that it does not *guard sufficiently against* the morally disastrous conclusions which may be drawn especially from its doctrine of the transcendence of both good and evil. Most of the defenders of the Vedānta in regard to this question have failed to recognize the distinction just made. The apologists have successfully refuted the charge of direct incitement to evil, but they have not been equally successful in rebutting the criticism that they insufficiently protect the good. They have rightly condemned the desire to obtain merit by particular good acts, but they have not sufficiently realized the ethical value of the general desire for the permanence of the good. We may agree with Max Müller that this system 'never was intended as freedom in the sense of licence, but as freedom that can neither lapse into sinful acts nor claim any merit for good acts, being at rest and blessed in itself and Brahman.'[2] We may also admit the contention of the Vedāntists themselves that the enlightened man will not do evil because the illusion which is the preliminary of all action whatsoever has been destroyed. But does their teaching provide

[1] *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 359. [2] *Six Systems*, p. 180.

sufficiently for the enlightenment of any outside the circle of the chosen few, and are the enlightened men themselves supplied with a sufficient reason for the doing of good? Is it not a matter of indifference whether they continue to act or not? May they not 'live as it happens'?

A similar criticism may be directed against the defence which is offered by Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan. He points out, in the first place, that the Upanishads, 'by saying that the wise man, he who knows God, avoids both virtue and vice, mean that such a man rises above popular morality, above the desire for reward, the fear of punishment.' If this were all that was meant, the defence would be justified to a large extent, but the pundit goes further and says that certain passages 'indicate the purely impersonal attitude to which the mind is raised by conscious union with God, an attitude so far above all considerations of personal gain and loss, and so perfectly at one with the universal, that, if one were to do even an apparently sinful act from such a standpoint, no sin would be imputed to him.' Again it is asserted that this 'obliteration of distinctions is simply meant to express the fundamental unity of things.'[1] This 'apparently sinful action,' we suppose, means an action which, if committed by an unenlightened man, would be unhesitatingly condemned as sinful; and, if this is so, it would seem that a very dangerous privilege is conceded to the enlightened person. It is, further, difficult to distinguish 'the purely impersonal attitude' from the attitude of indifference, and the 'obliteration of distinctions' is too big a price to pay for a maintenance of 'a sense of the unity of all things.'

We may discover the influence of this conception of morality even in the writings of one of the

[1] Cf. *Hindu Theism*, p. 104.

leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. On the subject of *Bhakti* he says: 'True *Bhakti* is beyond the region of morality and immorality. The *Bhakta* cannot be sinful. It is unnecessary to say that he must be holy. The truth of the matter is this. The ground of moral purity must be fully secured before *Bhakti* can begin. Let all sin first go away; let all moral duties be first discharged, and then only can the discipline of *Bhakti* commence. Unless a man's character is thoroughly good, he is unworthy to take up the question of *Bhakti*. . . . Mere morality is not enough for *Bhakti*, but immorality makes *Bhakti* impossible. It is a most dangerous thing to say that a *Bhakta* can ever be immoral. It is never his custom to say, "First let me cultivate *Bhakti* and I shall be pure afterwards." No; he eschews all sin before he begins *Bhakti*.' [1]

We have quoted this passage for two reasons. In the first place, it fully bears out our contention that it is unfair to charge the Vedāntic conceptions (which have largely influenced this passage, even though the writer does not belong, strictly speaking, to the Vedāntic school) with an explicit and positive tendency towards licence. But, in the second place, the passage seems no less clearly to illustrate the point that the Vedāntic position gives an insufficient support to the good. The highest religious attainment is one which leaves morality behind it. *Bhakti* is a further stage, which we reach *after* we have fully performed the duties of the moral life. Morality is not carried *into* this highest sphere, nor is religious devotion regarded as the crown and development of morality. *Bhakti* is an 'extra' in the moral life, and not the spring of it. Morality does not reveal truth—it is little more than a spiritual gymnastic. It does not lead to the religious

[1] P. C. Mazumdar's *Rise and Progress of the Brahmo Samaj*.

point of view, neither does the religious attitude lead necessarily to morality. The enlightened man looks down from a superior height upon morality, as upon a stage which he has transcended. He himself may most assuredly continue to respect all the requirements of morality, but does he give to morality all the support of his exalted position? Is there not a slight suggestion here that morality is a problem for souls of lower rank, and is there not a danger that these less exalted souls may imagine too soon that they themselves have reached the higher level and may abandon the sphere of morality before they have performed all its duties? What may be no danger to the enlightened man is certainly a danger to them, and the system does not sufficiently protect them from this danger. The thought of the goal ought never to diminish our attention to the steps which are necessary to reach it. The relation of the highest ideal, call it ethical or call it religious, to the moral life of our every day is always —to use Green's phrase—'a further stage of the same journey.'

Yet the Vedāntic doctrine unmistakably is that we cannot carry moral distinctions with us to the highest life, nor can we use moral categories to describe the ultimate unity. It is a unity excluding all differences, and, therefore, the differences between evil and good. They are sublated into this unity and perish within it. Cf. the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* (II. 1): 'To know every quality as possessed by Brahman is oneself to possess Brahman. The qualities give themselves up as servants unto him, but he does not ask for them.' Vedāntic Pantheism shares this obliteration of distinctions with modern Pantheism, though the attitude of the latter is very frequently somewhat different. In it evil is viewed as a lesser good, or, at least, as a necessary

part of the system of things; in Indian Pantheism the distinction is dropped and both good and evil are relegated to the unreality of the finite.

In both, however, the explanation of the procedure may be found in excessive intellectualism. There is no such thing as sin: there are only mistakes. Evil is nothing but ignorance, and carries no positive harm. With the modern Pantheist evil is only evil because we do not see its place in the whole; with the Vedāntist it is evil only because we do not see that good and evil alike belong to the unreal world—the world of semblances.

We may now consider the metaphysical justification for the theory that the ultimately real is non-ethical. A basis for the theory is found in the assertion that the good is something which is desired, and that therefore, because desire involves incompleteness, the predicate good cannot be applied to anything which is, by supposition, complete. 'We do not value the universe,' it is said, 'we value all else by it.' But perhaps the fuller truth may be that we hesitate to give value to the universe, not because it has no value, but because it has supreme value as the standard of all other values. We may value finite things by the degree in which they reflect this character of the whole, and if the whole has no character, all valuation even of the part would be impossible. A thing does not borrow its goodness merely from the fact that it is desired. We desire it because it is good, or, in other words, because it seems to us to have an inalienable right to a place in a scheme of reality of a definite character. Good does not partake of the impermanence of our desires and pass out of existence with them, nor, in general, does its connection with desire disqualify it in the very slightest for being a predicate of reality. The mere fact of desire, which even the

Vedāntist would admit as a universal characteristic of human nature, implies the recognition of a standard of value which is not dependent upon the desire itself. Even the destruction of desire at which the Vedāntist aims could not, supposing it were possible, alter the fact that this testimony had been given.

It may, of course, be true that we cannot apply the predicate good to the universe if by good we mean that it is attaining in ever fuller measure to a standard outside of and beyond itself, but we can at least apply the predicate as a description of the definite character which we believe the universe to have. Our hesitation arises from our practice of using the predicate good to indicate a *satisfactory degree of approach* towards a goal. In human life the word has always a reference to something beyond, and therefore we get into the habit of thinking that, when there is nothing beyond, the predicate cannot rightly be applied. But, surely, we may distinguish between relative good, in the sense of gradual attainment and good in a more absolute sense, used as a description of the highest we can conceive. It does not follow that because the first use has become meaningless, the second use should also be abandoned. Though we may have to transcend many erroneous and limited moral predicates, there is no metaphysical justification for the idea that we may not carry any moral predicate whatsoever into the region of the absolute. The use of moral predicates in application to ourselves implies that we stand in a certain definite relation to the whole, and we cannot be related definitely to a nonentity or a pure abstraction.

Of course, we must remember that to apply the predicate good to the absolute is not sufficient for moral purposes unless we abandon the idea of pan-

theistic passivity. If we imagine that without any effort on our part we may be caught within the sweep of a good absolute, we have advanced ethically only a very little beyond the point of view from which the absolute is conceived of as altogether indifferent to goodness. To think that we are already good is as fatal ethically as to think that it does not matter whether we are good or bad. This danger of false optimism is, however, rather aside from my immediate argument, and is here introduced merely as a caution, its proper place being in the discussion of freedom in relation to pantheistic thought. Here we are concerned more immediately with the question whether there are any valid reasons, from a metaphysical point of view, against the application of moral predicates to the divine unity. We have found no such valid reason against, and it is surely true, as Dr. Rashdall puts it, that 'our conception of the highest good may be inadequate, but we certainly shall not attain to greater adequacy or a nearer approach to ultimate truth by flatly contradicting our own moral judgments. It would be just as reasonable to argue that, because the law of gravitation might be proved, from the point of view of the highest knowledge, to be an inadequate statement of the truth, and all inadequacy involves some error, therefore we had better assume that, from the point of view of God, there is no difference between attraction and repulsion.' [1]

It would seem to be a natural demand of the human spirit that goodness should be rooted in ultimate reality, and this is also a *necessary* demand if we are to obtain sufficient support for the moral life and adequate security against evil. The force of obligation is weakened if goodness is regarded as merely a moral ideal and less than the ultimate

[1] *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 68.

truth of things. And, in considering the practical effect of this sublimation of both good and evil, we may notice that, if good is also thought out of existence, the negation of evil, which every one would be disposed to regard as a desirable element in the system, loses much of its force. For evil cannot simply be negated: it must be conquered. It is not therefore to be wondered at if we find the Vedāntic writers in difficulties in their attempts even to think evil out of existence.

In the presuppositions of their system they have everything in their favour. Seeing that there is in evil what has been called a 'unique sense of personality,' it is quite intelligible that, in a system where little emphasis is laid on personality, the sense of evil will not be very acute and consequently the difficulty of explaining it away not very serious. Still, even such evil as is recognized appears to be an uncomfortable and even insoluble problem for the Vedāntist. Śaṅkara and his followers try to explain the inequalities and miseries of the world by reference to the law of Karma. In the *Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras* (2. 1. 34), we read that 'Inequality of dispensation and cruelty cannot be attributed to Brahman on account of his regarding merit and demerit. For so Scripture declares.' The unequal conditions at any stage in the universe are thus declared to be due to the merit or demerit of the individuals concerned at some previous stage, and, if we wish scriptural authority, we are referred back to the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* (iii. 8): 'For he makes him whom he wishes to lead up from these worlds, do a good deed, and the same makes him whom he wishes to lead down from these worlds, do a bad deed.' Thus evil, as it at present exists, cannot be explained by reference to a central principle of unity, but only in connection with a law to which

God himself is subject. If we urge that this is simply to regularize and rationalize evil, and is, therefore, not a sufficient explanation, we are met in one passage by the assertion that there is no beginning which requires explanation.[1] This law of the process has always been in existence, and therefore God cannot be made responsible for the origin of it. In place of an explanation, then, we have here what is virtually an acknowledgment of insolubility.

A reference to the doctrine of nescience provides another way of escape for the embarrassed Vedāntist. In his *Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras* (2. 1. 21), Śaṅkara says, 'As soon as the consciousness of no difference arises in us, the transmigratory state of the individual and the creative quality of Brahman vanish at once, and what becomes then of the creator and the faults of not doing what is beneficial and the like?' This explanation is more in accordance with the general spirit of Śaṅkara's teaching, but the other reference to the law of Karma shows that the explanation of nescience is not considered as sufficient in itself. Occasionally it is seen to be a mere shutting of the eyes, and, when they are opened, recourse is had to a law which is not an explanation but a mere statement of inevitableness.

It is easy to see that, in the minds of those for whom we are simply part of God, there will be a strong temptation to explain evil by denying its actuality as the opposite of good, but the strength of the temptation does not increase the value of the explanations. The attempt which they have made is really a hopeless one, for the truth is that evil cannot be explained away by process of thought. There must be some positive force to put over against

[1] Cf. *Comm. on Vedānta Sūtras*, 2. 1. 35.

it, and unless this is provided for us we are destined to the pessimism of defeat.

Practically, the consequences of this attitude of indifference to moral distinctions are depressing. We cannot for long maintain the attitude of exaltation above all differences, and when we fall below it and allow the finite to regain its power of attracting attention, it is evil which first tightens its grasp upon us. We may put the matter theoretically and say that we have divided abruptly between truth and sense appearance, and, that consequently the latter has become detached from all control. We are then determined to action by the concrete and particular character of our experience, and can see no principle of unification or of guidance. Our conduct is determined by the circumference of our experience rather than by the centralizing ideas. We are at the mercy of every wayward impulse, and out of this chaos and confusion of evil we have provided no way of escape. And what have we to put over against these evil forces ? In our struggle against them the conception of the unreality of evil is not a powerful enough influence. We require something more positive, and we find this counteractive only in the belief that goodness is an ultimate and supreme reality. Without such a faith it would seem that human nature must despairingly acquiesce in the practical dominance of evil. The metaphysical *theory* may demand that we take up a strongly negative attitude to evil, but the practical result may easily be somewhat different. We may, in moments of weakness at least, reflect that evil is on the line of least resistance, and there is much truth in the words of Moberly that ' the mystic who finds God negatively through the intellect, by dissolving in thought all the attributes of God, is saved only by his moral earnestness and by

a happy incapacity for being fully consistent from what would have been at first an intellectual scepticism and ultimately a moral chaos also.' [1]

And, on the other hand, when we wish to deliver ourselves from this moral chaos, or even to turn aside from the path of slothfulness, the question which immediately presents itself and which no amount of philosophical reasoning can prevent our asking is,—'Is the struggle worth while?' We do not necessarily ask this question under the influence of any low and materialistic desire for reward. We need not even put it in a personal form, at least if by personal we mean anything approaching a selfish point of view; but we cannot get away from the idea of the completion of personal efficiency and from the demand that we should be allowed to find ourselves again in an eternal Reality of which goodness is an essential characteristic. This need of a warmer and more personal ideal is indicated occasionally in the Upanishads themselves. Cf. *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (viii. 3. 2): 'We reach the wishes we have never had fulfilled and rejoin those whom we have lost, if we descend into our heart where Brahman dwells. There are all our true desires, but hidden by what is false.' But this idea of Brahman as the home of our true desires, the reality of our 'projected efficiency,' is not maintained. For the most part, at least, even if our true desires are to find their satisfaction in Brahman, they are permitted to do so only by giving up all definiteness of character, and losing themselves in an ocean of nothingness.

If, however, we have the dismal consciousness that one lot happeneth to all, that there is no real distinction between good and evil, and that good is no more akin to the ultimate meaning of

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 11.

the world than evil, we cannot long continue to strive for the better. We shall be apt to seize prematurely upon the sublimation of good and evil, and allow ourselves to act as we please, seeing that in any case we arrive at no real result. If our desires should happen not to be vigorous, we shall acquiesce too readily in the actual dominance of evil in the world around us—which is a practical judgment of pessimism. We shall suffer more and more from the disease of 'impuissance de vivre.' Nothing will seem really worth striving for—not even the highest goodness, therefore why should we strive? Our struggles count for nothing, therefore let them cease. We are going nowhere in particular in the journey of life, therefore we may go anywhere. Metaphysical emptiness and moral indifference are not very far away from each other. In any case we cannot hope for the continual support of religion in our moral life. There is no passage from our religious ideal to the duties of life, and consequently there is great danger that these may remain undone, and that we may fail to take our share in reducing actual and depressing moral confusions. Left to itself, the chaos may overwhelm us, notwithstanding all the theoretical defences of an abstract philosophy.

By the Vedāntic method, according to Eucken, 'Man attains a purely inward life, but it cannot be denied that there is no path leading from this inwardness to the wide field of life. Hence, in the end, there remains a cleavage between the height of the inner life and the rest of existence. There are only particular moments when the thought of the All takes complete possession of us.' And we may add that if, in these rare moments, the thought of the All is without moral colouring, we do not receive from it strength and inspiration which will send us forth to our world again. Rather it is that

in weakness and without protection we have once more to confront the sorrow and the pain and the evil, which after all *are* there and will remain until we take mightier weapons than abstract thinking and vague devotion wherewith to fight against them.

We must now ask the question whether, even supposing that the distinction between good and evil retained its sharpness and its inspirational force, the system here set forth makes possible any genuine effort or warrants any belief in progress. We are immediately confronted by the alleged *determinism* and *conservatism* of the Vedānta.

In so far as the reality of the world is admitted, and a tendency towards naturalistic Pantheism is manifested, the standpoint of the Upanishads would seem to be one of rigid determinism. The view exactly resembles that of Spinoza, and here, also, there is no question of the 'freedom of the will within the range of nature.' Man is simply a part of the universe, and has not proper individuality or power of initiative. On the empirical side, at any rate, the bondage is complete. Present actions are controlled not only by the past actions of this particular life, but by those of a whole series of lives. The consciousness of this bondage has a paralysing effect, for it seems as if a dark Fate overwhelmed us, and the result is apparent both in mental depression and practical inactivity. As Wilkins says, 'This bowing to Fate paralyses effort, and multitudes die every year through its baneful influence. In times of sickness remedial measures will not be tried, because it is written that the patient must die whatever trouble be taken and expense incurred.' [1]

If we are simply parts of the whole, we can have no freedom in reference to the whole, and if our

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 320.

aim is absorption, power of initiative will appear to us altogether unimportant. To borrow the phraseology of the Upanishads, we are in the empirical world fettered like a bird to its nest. There is a suggestion of fatalism in the *Kaushītaki Upanishad*. The Self of the universe with whom we are to obtain unity is a dominating, predestinating power, determining some to good deeds and others to evil deeds. The same idea reappears in Śaṅkara's *Commentary on Sūtra* ii. 1. 35 : 'As the world is without beginning, merit and inequality are like seed and sprout, caused as well as causes, and there is, therefore, no logical objection to their operation.' It may be noticed also that the idea was so strongly rooted in Vedāntic thought as to pass over into other schools of thought. Even in the theistically inclined Patañgali we read, 'Whatever I do, good or bad, voluntary or involuntary, that is all made over to thee. I act as impelled by thee.' [1]

It will, no doubt, be admitted by the Vedāntists and by those influenced by them that empirical freedom is an impossibility ; but they will go on to argue that this is a matter of small moment, as room is still left for transcendental freedom. After all, we are told, the self which dominates us is not an alien self. It is our own self. We are not crushed by the universal : we *are* the universal ; and if we can but attain to the universal point of view we shall discover our freedom. The way of life which is prescribed is itself emancipation. We may be advised to study more carefully the passage which has been quoted above from the *Kaushītaki Upanishad*, or we may be referred to a passage like the following from the *Chhāndogya* : 'Therefore who departs from him without having discovered the self and the true desires, in all worlds there will be

[1] *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha*, p. 261.

for them a life of unfreedom. But those who depart from here, having discovered the soul and true desires, for them is in all worlds a life of freedom' (viii. 6.) The doctrine of determinism must be supplemented by a doctrine of freedom. By following the idealistic teaching of the Vedānta we are enabled to regard the whole chain of cause and effect as an illusory one. What does it matter though we are but links in the chain, if the chain itself does not exist? We need not worry about the strength of the walls of the prison-house if it is possible for us to get outside.

But the difficulty lies just here—how are we to get outside? The freedom which is promised seems to be very similar to that offered by Kant, and reminds us of the criticism passed upon his doctrine to the effect that it is an attempt to comfort a man in prison with the assurance that there is freedom outside his prison. The Vedānta philosophy promises us deliverance when we are outside the chain of cause and effect, but, at the same time, it takes away from us all such power of initiative as would make it possible for us to break the chain. It dazzles us with the prospect of freedom and at the same time emphasizes our bondage. Whenever we ascribe even so much reality to our experience as is involved in making it an object of thought at all, we are confronted with the doctrine of emanation and with the theory of the whole world proceeding from God and returning to Him, inevitably, irresistibly. The determinism is found to be not only within the natural universe and amidst its details: it exists between these details as a whole and the unity we are asked to reach by transcending the empirical. Thus we lose all sense of reliance upon our own personality and also all sense of responsibility. It is a mistake to think

that *we* have done certain things : neither have we done them, nor have we the power to do them. There seems to be no point at which we can even initiate the progress towards the divine, and freedom thus becomes an idle dream. It is offered to us with the one hand and taken away with the other, and this contrast between a transcendental ideal on the one hand, and, on the other, an actuality which is throughout described deterministically, is bound to have a depressing effect. The door of our prison-house is opened a little way, and we catch a glimpse of the outside world of freedom. But at the same time we realize that, with the means at our disposal, we can never reach this world. And so we become uncomfortable and suspicious of our visions, and, like Descartes' captive, ' who perchance was enjoying in his dreams an imaginary liberty, and begins to suspect that it is a vision,' we also ' dread awaking, and conspire with the agreeable illusions, in order that the deception may be prolonged ' (*Med.* 1). Only, face to face with the facts of life, we find it impossible to prolong the deception. The open door of vision becomes the shut door of reality, and we sit in the darkness again, feeling the weight of our fetters, and hearing the sighs of our fellow prisoners. But now we know that it is the prison-house and the fetters which are real, and the open country and the freedom which are illusory—so far as we are concerned.

Even if we were to grant that the freedom could be attained, the question immediately arises whether it is worth attaining. It is undoubtedly a deliverance from many of the ills of life, and also from the power of temptation. But the character of the deliverance itself does not satisfy us. It may be described as freedom, but it is rather absorption, carrying with it, as its highest virtue, resignation.

It is a purely negative freedom, gained by the sacrifice of personality rather than by the development of it. That this would produce disappointment was indicated long ago by Rāmānuja: 'If a man were to realize that the effect of activity [directed towards final release] would be the loss of personal existence, he surely would turn away as soon as any one began to tell him about release,'[1] and Rāmānuja goes on to tell us that no pupils would remain with a teacher holding such doctrines. This dissatisfaction with a freedom which is purely negative is expressed by many modern writers on the Vedānta, and we can quite well understand why such freedom should seem inadequate. The only freedom worth having is the freedom which gives us the right to act and not merely to abstain from acting, a freedom which invigorates rather than benumbs our faculties, which strengthens us to bear the burden rather than to lay it down, to undertake the trust rather than to escape from it. Abstraction from ordinary experience is not necessarily concentration on spirituality. We may be delivered from the stormy sea of passionate desires, but this is of small advantage if we perish with hunger upon a desert shore. We do not reach the highest religious level simply by caring little for the things that are temporal: we must also care much for the things that are eternal.

The assertion of determinism relieved only by a purely abstract freedom produces a *conservative* attitude to life, and involves a denial of progress. This becomes obvious if we consider, first of all, the subjective effect of determinism. If a naturalistic determinism leaves no place for moral initiative, it will also fail to provide for the feeling of subjective remorse which creates, by contrast with itself, the

[1] *Vedānta Sutras*, Rāmānuja's *Commentary*, i. 1. 1.

desire for moral progress. If *we* did not commit the sins which distress us, or if they were due simply to the spirit of the whole working through us, there is no reason why we should be sorry for them. Regret or shame are useless: these unfortunate occurrences simply *had to be*. Now, at first sight, this absence of personal remorse might seem to be an optimistic gain, relieving us from a considerable amount of discomfort. But is it not the case that the comfort which comes from a sense of irresponsibility for disastrous actions is likely soon to pass into dull and cold indifference? If this be so, the relief is only temporary, and the final issue is a deepening of the gloom. Even apart from the obstacles which it places in the path of progress, the temper of callousness has a hardening effect which is very nearly akin to despair. There are moods in which men would give anything to be able to break through the ice of indifference and become sorry for their misdeeds; for in such sorrow there is an element of hope. But if they can be only indifferent towards their failings, even the impulse which makes deliverance possible is taken away, and dull acquiescence in imperfection of character is all that remains. Wakefulness of spirit seems desirable even at the cost of pain, and there is no depression deeper than that of the soul which desires to *feel* and cannot feel—even pain. And this depression is deepened if, from the same point of view, we regard other lives. If we are trying to exert a moral influence upon another, we depend upon rousing within him a sense of shame and remorse, and if there is no justification for this attempt, as the philosophy we are considering would have us believe, our leverage is gone. Progress is possible only if dissatisfaction with present attainments, either in ourselves or in others, is available to produce a desire for progress.

But the further question arises whether, even granting that we have the factors necessary to produce this desire, it can be justified from an objective point of view. Does the world system as conceived by the Vedānta admit of progress, or must we be content merely with process, and with empty return to the point from which we set out ?

The denial of world-progress includes within it the denial of individual progress, and this latter, again, is a corollary of the denial of freedom. If we are bound in the chain of the past, or if everything we may think we are doing is the inevitable action of the Divine Unity working through us, then we are deprived of all incitement to action. ' An icy cold breath ' has blown upon us and benumbed our faculties. Our actions become merely recurrent exercises of the soul, and the moral struggle is a meaningless process, leading to no useful end. As is said in the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad* (ii. 36) : ' Whoso knows the being of the world, he holds true to unity—sure of the want of difference, he moves cold in the world.' In general, if we allow the thought of *being* to occupy the foremost place in our minds we shall not pay much attention to *becoming*, either because moral becoming is superfluous or because it is inevitable. And if, further, the *being* is conceived of as abstract, and admits of no concrete and permanent individual character, the stimulus to progress on the part of the individual is taken away. In order that a man may put forth his most intense moral effort, he must believe that his efforts count for something in the scheme of reality. If he cannot have this faith, it would be almost a contradiction in terms to say that he believes in progress in individual character. It is undoubtedly true that in this system, as Schlegel says, ' The divine origin of man is continually incul-

cated to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with divinity as the primary object of every action and exertion'; but mere reunion is not progress, and yet it seems impossible to obtain from the Vedānta a higher ideal than this of the return of the soul upon itself, and the abandonment, at the end, of all that has been won by moral endeavour.

If, further, a man feels that he himself can make no real progress, he is not likely to attribute progress to the world as a whole, or to conceive of it in terms of a gradual embodiment of an ideal. If he cannot himself initiate reform, and if it is true that in the larger world 'all movements toward reform and progress are due to personal initiative in the first instance,' it is a short step to the belief that no schemes of reform whatsoever have enduring value, and that reality does not admit of them.

The spirit of this philosophy in its more idealistic phase does not admit of such attention to the world process as would invest it with the dignity of progress. If Brahman is the sole reality, and if the world, philosophically considered, is unreal, progress can mean only a gradual negation of the world. The past can have no value for the guidance of the future, for past and future alike, as belonging to the time-process, are unreal. The teaching of history is a meaningless phrase, for why should we seek to understand the past in order to go beyond it, if the whole is a meaningless round? Why should we spend our efforts at reform upon a totality which as a whole is an unreality? We become oppressed with a sense of futility, for in Brahman everything is lost, like bubbles in the ocean. Abstract idealism can permit no reform of the world, but only an abandonment of it.

If, on the other hand, being more naturalistically inclined, we fail in our idealistic endeavour, and discover that the world refuses to be negated, are we any nearer a belief in the possibility of progress? It would seem rather that after we have tried—and failed—to negate the world, it will present itself to us, on our return to it, as a huge insoluble problem. We have found no place for it in our philosophy, but we have been unable to get rid of it. What has been described as a 'sense of cosmic discouragement' steals upon us. We have taken the reason out of the world and left it as a formless mass, while yet it oppresses us continually with its problems. We have failed to explain the world—why should we not run away from it and leave it in its present unsatisfying state?[1] The same refusal to entertain the idea of progress forces itself on our notice even in the teaching of the interpreters of the Vedānta who would ascribe greater reality to the ordinary world. No doubt there are phases of the Vedāntic teaching in which the world is regarded as divine and full of meaning. But even in this connection the question remains whether, when we get beyond the region of poetical idealization, the reality which we are permitted to retain 'for practical purposes'—as Max Müller would put it—admits of progress or only of process.

We are compelled to choose the latter alternative. The general effect of the position taken up is simply to deify the existing state of things or what, independently of all human endeavour, is the inevitable consequence of the existing state. As it stands, the universe is regarded as divine, and it would, therefore, seem almost impious to regard it as either requiring change or susceptible of it. Already it is perfect, at least with a potentiality which does not

[1] 'It is better to die,' is a common Bengali saying.

require our help in order that it may be transformed into an actuality. If we should still have doubts as to this perfection, we must remember our ignorance, and conceive it as at least possible that there is no such thing as evil, and that what we regard as evil is so only because of our partial view of the whole.

Process there no doubt is, but it is only of a cyclic character. And there may be many series of such processes in the illimitable succession of the centuries, but there will be no advance. Each later cycle, as it comes, will resemble the earlier, in meaningless repetition. All things will be as they were in the beginning.

What, then, is the effect of this denial of progress upon our sense of the value of life ? It would seem that it must be depressing—for the following reasons. In the first place, it deepens the sense of bondage which the determinism of the system has already produced in us. We should not feel that there was so much of fatefulness in the refusal of individual freedom if we could be sure that the world-process with which we are bound up, and to which we are told that we must surrender ourselves, were, in any sense of the word, a progress and not a process. We *might* be willing to surrender our individuality for the sake of an increasing purpose, but when this also is denied us, the surrender is unrelieved.

Secondly, the denial of progress deprives us of the remnant of value which the pantheistic explanation of pain and evil seems to possess. Suffering, e.g., has been explained as sacrifice for the good of the whole ; but sacrifice is unmeaning in an unprogressive world—it serves no purpose. Neither—to take the narrower point of view—can we explain physical suffering as necessary for the moral progress of the individual. If moral progress is

ultimately either unnecessary or impossible, there is no place for such painful agencies as may be expected to promote it.

Again, the denial of progress makes it more difficult for us to accept the transcendence of moral distinctions which the Vedānta in both its phases would inculcate. We are more ready to agree that evil is necessary for growth, or that, when viewed in connection with the whole, it is no evil, if we can see that some plan for the whole is being worked out. But when such insight is denied us, when we find that what we have to acquiesce in is the place of evil in the present world or in some future world which is in no way different from this one, the denial of evil (under such circumstances) can give us comfort only so long as we can, somewhat slothfully, shut our eyes to it. But it is difficult to content ourselves with this position. The ever-recurring demand of the human soul is that evil should be regarded, not as a normal but as an abnormal thing, as something which can have an end and must be allowed to have an end. We cannot permanently acquiesce in its inevitableness : to do so even temporarily is a pessimistic judgment. Yet without progress we seem shut up to this—or to a mere theoretical removal of the difficulty.

Finally, we come to the chief reason of all : the denial of progress paralyses human effort and makes impossible the joy which such effort creates. The subjective effect of the denial is a sense of futility, and the futile is not worthy of human endeavour. In the *Kaushītaki Upanishad* we get the advice, 'Let no one try to find out what action is—let him know the agent,' and the advice is all too readily taken. Why should we act in reference to a world which is meaningless, or in reference to a reality which will give no permanent place to the results

of our efforts? Indian writers often refuse to face the difficulty here, and strengthen themselves in their position by reminding us that the highest souls do not desire the fruit of works. But, as has been already pointed out, there is here no question of desiring the fruit of works in any material shape. There is, however, a question—and an unavoidable question—of the ultimate usefulness or uselessness of work. If the denial of progress involves that all work is, in the last resort, a futile endeavour, the effect of this doctrine is without doubt paralysing and depressing, and prompts the question which is well put by Eucken, 'Must we not conclude that all our work is vain, and would not this conviction of futility arrest every vital impulse and put an end to all joy in active creative effort?' Again he puts the matter in closer relation to our subject by remarking that 'The futility of a life like this—a life entirely adrift on the ocean of becoming—was never felt more keenly than by the Hindus.'[1] We may not desire reward in the shape of pleasure, but we certainly desire it in the shape of result, and it is difficult to undergo labour and trouble, to offer the sacrifice of renunciation, while all the time we have the disconcerting consciousness that the lives both of ourselves and others are supremely unimportant. It is more than difficult—it is impossible, for it is contrary to human nature. As the Upanishads themselves allow, 'Whatever man reaches he wishes to go beyond.'[2] If we are simply adrift on the ocean of becoming, and if the stream flows in no definite direction; if, as things have been so they will be for ever and for ever, without progress, we feel inclined to ask, 'What is the use of it all?' The universality of the reach of the pantheistic con-

[1] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 42.
[2] *Aitareya Up.*, iii. 3. 1.

ception swallows up the importance of the individual, and mere cyclic processes have a satiating effect upon us—'a like event happens to all.' Under the influence of the innate impulsive activity of human nature we may initiate new schemes, but we have not the power of continuance. Soon there comes to us the paralysing thought that this has happened before, and, even though there appear to be improvement, it can be but temporary, and we shall be back before long at the place where we were at the beginning. Those who are interested in Indian reforms have often to lament the spasmodic character of the efforts put forth. There are many new beginnings, but steady continuance is not so frequently to be marked. A recent writer in the *Hindustan Review* has directly connected this failure in constructive social effort with the esoteric character of Indian philosophy: 'By making the impermanency of every state of being, earthly and heavenly, a cardinal point, Hinduism has so stereotyped the mental condition of its adherents that there is no immediate prospect of Indian thought being in the least prepared to discard the eternal reproduction of its old ideas. . . . Brahmans have for ages been teaching the Hindus the ways and means of escape from the world of restless strife and error, and a speedy departure to another tenement. . . . The old notions as to the unreality and consequently the futility of life are still abundantly manifest.' [1]

So we conclude that in this system of philosophy the highest ethical values find insufficient support. It has had a benumbing effect on the national energies for the reason that it has failed to maintain the eternal distinction between right and wrong, or respond to the individual consciousness of freedom.

[1] Captain Berkeley Mill, *Hindustan Review*, December 1912.

Nor does it lay hold on the power of the future and satisfy our demand for an ideal beyond the present, an ideal of fullness of life, based on a Divine Reality which is the source at once of all the good that now is and of all that is to be. If this demand of the human spirit is ignored, if we are told that our highest aspirations have no claim to rank as interpretations of reality, that freedom and progress are but vain imaginations, then pessimism and gloomy conservatism are the inevitable results. There ensues a contemplative attitude which refuses to—

> Take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And, by opposing, end them.

And this indifference to practical requirements results further in what has been described as a 'cataleptic insensibility,' or—less strongly perhaps—a relapse into vacuity of interest and poverty of purpose. Progress is essential to optimism and, conversely, optimism is essential to progress. If, therefore, we would have progress, we must generate an atmosphere of optimism, and this we can do only through faith in an ideal beyond the actual, which shall show its ultimate reality, not by negation of the actual, but by conservation of the good that is in the actual and victory over the evil. Such a faith Indian philosophy can attain to only as it strengthens the theistic elements in its creed, and abandons its contempt for the historical and its worship of philosophical abstractions.

We have now concluded our survey of what might be called the most typical philosophy of India, viz. the Vedānta. We have indicated the interconnections of its various texts and their place in the historical development of Indian thought. We

have tried to show the circumstances in which the philosophical problems arose, and have characterized to some extent the solution offered, tracing it through its two phases as these are found implicitly in the Upanishads and more explicitly in the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja. We have seen reason to apply the name Pantheism to the main tendencies of both aspects, and have discovered a close connection with pessimism. Finally, we have attempted to analyse certain peculiarities of Vedāntic thought with the view of finding out whether we may assign some reasons for the pessimistic conclusions arrived at. We have found these causes in the excessive intellectualism leading to a reaction in the direction of excessive emotionalism; in the metaphysical and religious inadequacy of the system, in its transcendence of ethical distinctions, and in its conservatism and denial of progress. In the course of our inquiry we have found many elements of value in the thought we have been considering and many hints of the direction in which true advance might be made. We shall return in the last chapter of our essay to some suggestions of the ways in which the valuable elements in Vedānta thought may be conserved and its defects remedied by a fuller conception of both the divine and the human. But in the remaining chapters of this book we shall devote ourselves to some account of the philosophical environment of Vedānta thought, and shall also endeavour to trace the operation of pantheistic elements in the less strictly philosophical literature and in the popular religion. We shall finally concern ourselves with the religious thought of modern India, in order to see whether the influence of Pantheism has continued down to the present time, and, if so, what its effect has been and now is.

CHAPTER XII

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE VEDĀNTA: A NOTE UPON SOME OTHER INDIAN PHILOSOPHIES

We have found that the conclusions of the Vedānta have led to a somewhat pessimistic outlook upon life, and we may now retrace our steps and consider the view of life embodied in other classical systems of Indian philosophy—notably the *Sāṅkhya*. These systems are often ostensibly and avowedly non-pantheistic, and it might be supposed that they have nothing to do with our subject. They seem, however, notwithstanding all avowals, to be based upon the same principles which are at the back of the pantheistic systems we have already studied. Nominally, they represent either a dualism which Pantheism found confronting it and failed to reconcile, or a direct rebound from Pantheism; but, in either case, whether we take them as problems previously set and remaining unsolved, or as consequences of the disruptive tendencies latent in Vedāntic Pantheism, they may serve to set in clearer light the difficulties from which this latter system has failed to extricate us.

There is, as we have already seen, and as we shall have occasion to consider more fully in the concluding book of this essay, in Pantheism, and especially in Indian Pantheism, a certain double tendency —towards a negative abstract position and towards

a positive, somewhat naturalistic position. This duality becomes practically evident in impossible counsels of idealism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, in passive acquiescence in the disabilities of life.

The result of our study of the Vedānta philosophy has been to show us that, although it starts out with a full consciousness of the problems it has to solve and realizes acutely the suffering and evil of the world, it gives no satisfactory solution of the problems. It frequently bids us turn away from the practical struggle and confine ourselves to a purely intellectual solution. But, as we have seen, this very reliance upon an intellectual solution has its own dangers, and, moreover, the particular form of the intellectual solution offered is metaphysically, morally, and religiously deficient. The system is little inclined to treat human experience as a whole with the seriousness which it demands. It affords an intellectual basis for mysticism, and demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other allied system, the aloofness of mysticism and its inability to grapple successfully with the problems of the actual. The attempts which have been made to come into line with ordinary experience are wavering and half-hearted, and have brought about no real reconciliation. In the sphere of ethics we can find within ourselves no sufficient spring of action, nor, when the actual forces itself upon us in all its waywardness and confusion, can we find in regard to it any assurance of the possibility of progress and reform.

In all our dealings with the pain and evil of the world we are brought face to face with the alternative of either denying or accepting their reality and the reality of their conditions. The Vedāntist adopts the former course of denial, but the pressure of life is too much for him, and he finds he must

adopt some compromise. He may do this by occupying the intermediate position of allowing a quasi-reality to the *facts* of pain and evil, but at the same time refusing to agree to the ordinary interpretation which is put upon these facts—i.e. he will refuse to call them pain and evil. But here again the pressure of ordinary experience will be too strong for him; and, in addition, he will have to answer the protest of a moral consciousness become uneasy because of such a transformation of moral values. The Vedāntist is thus driven finally to accept, in practical consciousness at least, the reality of pain and evil, and he is also condemned by the presuppositions of his philosophy to accept them as belonging to a world with which he has not adequate power to deal—i.e. to accept them as inevitable. Such an attitude is bound to have a pessimistic colouring, and he can escape from pessimism only if he can lay hold of some conception of progress. A conception of progress, however, can be based only on some sort of a reconciliation between the two extremes of abstract idealism and naturalism towards which the disruptive tendencies latent in Pantheism would seem to be leading us. At the point where the Vedānta leaves us, however, we seem to have to choose between flight and acquiescence, and in neither direction can we develop that courage which is necessary for the living of our lives. We seem, then, to be driven to the conclusion that pessimism is not merely, as Deussen calls it, 'a presupposition of the Vedāntic doctrine of deliverance.' The deliverance which is offered leads to a deeper pessimism from which there is no escape unless we turn our steps in an entirely different direction.

This conclusion may be strengthened by a short reference to systems contemporary with or succeed-

ing the Vedānta. In these we do not discover a very definitely marked change of direction. They rather, as we have said, illustrate the disruptive tendencies of Pantheism as we find it in the Vedānta, or at least manifest disruptive tendencies which Pantheism fails to reconcile and which are therefore preliminary to pessimism. The generally pessimistic character of these systems of thought is admitted by S. C. Banerji in his *Sāṅkhya Philosophy*. In reference to the system he says: 'If there is anything actual on the earth, if there is any experience which impresses us with an ineradicable feeling of stern reality, it is sorrow. That is the true portion of humanity here.' [1] Garbe speaks of the Sāṅkhya system as 'already saturated with pessimism.' [2] Davies describes the same philosophy as essentially involving the belief that 'our present physical life is a mere bondage; it is full of pain; it can never be the source of anything but sorrow and degradation.' [3] It would not be unreasonable to contend that we have here a fairly definite effect which might lead us to look for a cause somewhat similar to that which we have already seen capable of producing such an effect. But this is only an anticipation, and not a conclusion.

There is a comparatively easy interchange of conceptions between the different systems. Long ago Śaṅkara complained that the Sāṅkhya philosophers tried 'to show that all those Vedic texts which the Vedāntin claims as teaching the existence of Brahman, the intelligent and sole cause of the world, refer either to the *pradhāna* or to some product of the *pradhāna*, or else to the *purusha* in the Sāṅkhya sense, i.e. the individual soul.' [4] And in more modern times Pundit Tarkabagica thus

[1] Cf. p. xix. [2] *Philosophy of Ancient India*, p. 11.
[3] *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 102. [4] *Vedānta Sutras*, i. 4.

links together the fundamental conceptions of the Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, and Buddhistic systems: 'For an aspirant to liberation three things are to be known. Gautama says that liberation is to be got by knowing the distinction between soul and body. If body is known, matter is known. But, if matter is known, *prakṛiti*, or the cause of it, is known. Substitute *māyā* for *prakṛiti*, and the same holds good in reference to the Vedānta' (p. 13). Barth comes to much the same conclusions as to the interchangeability of the fundamental conceptions of the first two systems: 'The doctrine of illusion is not peculiar to the Vedānta. It affected the core of the Sāṅkhya philosophy as well. The *prakṛiti* of the last was identified with *māyā*; and the *purusha*, from the manifold which it was in the original system became the one and absolute Being. Under the new phase, the Sāṅkhya and the Vedānta differ only in terminology and in the details of exposition.'[1] Jacobs also holds that 'Brahman and *māyā* are the exact counterpart of the *purusha* and *prakṛiti* of the Sāṅkhya.'[2]

So much for transferability of conceptions. As regards historical connection it is difficult to come to any certain conclusion. We might, of course, make the general remark that, as a matter of history, such abstract Idealism and Pantheism as are advocated in the Vedānta have tended to pass very readily into atheism and materialism. The sequence, as has been pointed out by Caird, occurred over and over again in Western philosophy, and it is not unlikely that it may be traceable also in Eastern philosophy and in special connection with the transition from the Vedānta to the Sāṅkhya. In reference to these two systems we might point out that the Vedānta had no power to prevent an

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 77. [2] *Hindu Pantheism*, p. 47.

atheistic and sensational view of the world, and that, as the grasp of this system upon the central unity of things became less firm, it found itself involved in a more rigorous determinism and a more unrelenting pessimism, of which the Sāṅkhya philosophy would be an exceedingly natural expression. This view of the transition would be in accordance with the general position which is so frequently taken up, that the Upanishads are the sources of all succeeding philosophy. R. C. Bose, e.g., says: 'The orthodox systems were all evolved from the teachings of the Upanishads. One cannot study the Upanishads in connection with the systems of philosophy which have flourished in India in different periods of its history without being led to connect the former with the latter, the Upanishads with the systems, as cause and effect.'[1] Max Müller also, notwithstanding his hesitation and confession of ignorance regarding the chronology of Indian philosophy, decides in favour of a general priority of the Vedānta to the Sāṅkhya, and speaks of the latter as a 'toning down of the extreme monism of the *Advaita Vedānta*.'[2] Deussen takes up much the same position, arguing from the general consideration that monism is the natural attitude in philosophy, and that, wherever dualism has appeared, it is a consequence of antecedent stress and difficulty and a waning of the philosophic spirit. As regards the Sāṅkhya in particular, he argues that it is impossible to suppose that 'two principles like *purusha* and *prakriti*, distinct from first to last, should be accidentally lighted on in infinite space and infinite time, and further be so marvellously suited to one another that they could unite to evolve a universe'[3]; and he concludes that 'the

[1] *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 147.
[2] *Six Systems*, p. 229.
[3] *Upanishads*, p. 245.

result attained is rather to be conceived as the consequence of a natural disintegration of the doctrine of the Upanishads,' or 'as an extreme carrying out of the realistic tendency' which has already been noticed in these works.

Much might be said in support of these conclusions, and it should be pointed out that there is no evidence of the existence of the Sāṅkhya in the sixth century B.C., by the end of which century the older Upanishads were probably composed. On the other hand, we should notice that eminent scholars argue, with a vehemence equal to Deussen's, on behalf of the priority of the dualistic views to the monistic views, and that there is distinct evidence in favour of Sāṅkhyan influence upon some of the later Upanishads. Especially do we find this influence in the *Maitrāyana*, which is of comparatively late origin, and is also extremely pessimistic in tone. The third section contains a description of the self which is evidently applicable primarily to the *purusha*, or individual Self of the Sāṅkhya. Details of development, also, are introduced from the Sāṅkhya. The Self is said to be 'carried along by the waves of the qualities,' and in this phrase there seems to be a distinct reference to the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti*. Traces of similar influences are to be found in other later Upanishads, and of course in the Vedānta Sūtras and the various commentaries, the development of the argument is constantly determined by criticism of the Sāṅkhya position.

The conclusion, then, would seem to be that though the monistic doctrines contained in the earlier Upanishads may claim a certain amount of priority, yet for the most part the two systems exist side by side. We must—to borrow Max Müller's phrase—be content generally with a *nebeneinander* rather than a *nacheinander*. But, as already pointed

out, the question of exact sequence is really immaterial as regards our discussion. An examination of the Sāṅkhya philosophy reveals contradictions which fell to be solved and *were not solved* by the Vedānta. It is of little consequence whether a *systematic* consciousness of these unsolved contradictions emerged before or after the attempt of the Vedānta to solve them in the one contingency or to anticipate a solution in the other. In the Sāṅkhya the contradictions are 'writ large,' and altogether apart from any questions of temporal sequence the Vedāntic attempt to solve such contradictions was a failure, and will ever be a failure so long as we remain at the Vedāntic standpoint. There is a remarkable similarity between the conclusions of the Sāṅkhya and the conclusions of the Vedānta, and this suggests a similarity of premisses and of cause. More particularly it suggests that to the explicit dualism of the Sāṅkhya there corresponds an implicit dualistic tendency in the Vedānta, and thus shows more clearly than ever the need of a higher synthesis than the latter has provided.

The teaching of the Sāṅkhya is often associated with the name of Kapila, but it is doubtful whether he is more than a mythical centre for the focusing of certain ideas. The usual account given of him is that he lived some time before Gautama Buddha, probably in North India. His name is often associated with Kapila-vastu, the alleged birthplace of Buddha. The degree of his reforming detachment from the existing Brahmanic system is variously estimated. Sometimes he is said to have upheld the authority of revelation, but for the most part he laid stress on more immediate knowledge and meditation, and paid little attention to religious rites or the requirements of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The chief works from which we may gain a knowledge of the Sāṅkhya philosophy are the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*, the *Tattva Samāsa* (or 'Compendium of Doctrine') and the *Sāṅkhya Kārikās*. The *Sāṅkhya Sūtras* (or *Sāṅkhya Pravachana*) is a comparatively modern work of which one of the principal objects is to show that there is no difference between the Sāṅkhya system and the Vedānta. The date of this work is now assigned to the sixteenth century. There is no mention of it in the *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, which is usually considered as belonging to the fourteenth century. But though the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras* in its complete form is late in date, it is probably a recension of much older material. Of this older material the *Sāṅkhya Kārikās* (assigned to Īśvara Krishna, and consisting of seventy-two *ślokas* each enunciating a distinct doctrine) forms the most important part. These cannot be much later than the fifth century A.D., as they were translated into Chinese between A.D. 557 and 583.

Of still greater antiquity is the *Tattva Samāsa*. The *Kārikās* seem to presuppose a body of philosophical tradition connected with the Sāṅkhya school which must have been formulated in some way or other. Vijñāna Bhikshu, the commentator on the *Sāṅkhya Sūtras*, regards the *Tattva Samāsa* as prior to the *Kārikās*, and, in favour of this, there is the general consideration that a prose version is always likely to be prior to the metrical version. The *Tattva Samāsa* has certainly exercised little influence upon European scholars, and probably the reason of this is that Colebrooke, being unable to find a MS. of the *Tattva Samāsa*, translated the *Kārikās* instead, and thus gave them a more authoritative position. With some Indian writers also the smallness of the *Tattva Samāsa* may have militated against its popularity; but by many

pundits, on the other hand, it is regarded as giving the first authoritative statement of the Sāṅkhya philosophy, and it should not be regarded as a mere subsequent abstract of an earlier and more important work. Notwithstanding all this, however, it is a mere catalogue of topics, and, for the purposes of gaining a general knowledge of the Sāṅkhya system, the *Kārikās* will prove more useful.

The presupposition of the Sāṅkhya is, like that of the Vedānta, a pessimistic view of the world, and therefore the problem which presents itself for solution is much the same in the two cases—viz. the removal of suffering. We shall find that there is a great amount of similarity also in the means which are to be adopted for the removal of the suffering. There is no mistaking the pessimistic outlook. In *Kārikā* 55 we read: 'Pain is of the essence of bodily existence'; and *Kārikā* 1 states the problem of the whole inquiry in the most uncompromising terms: 'On account of the strokes of the three kinds of pain, an inquiry into the means of their removal. If the inquiry be pronounced superfluous because of the existence of obvious means, the reply is "no," owing to the absence of finality and absoluteness in them.' The three kinds of pain are: intrinsic, (bodily or mental); extrinsic (due to our interaction with the environment of created beings); and supernatural (due to the physical environment, or the 'act of God'). More generally, we may say that our pain arises from irrational connection with the objects of sense. Because of this we are liable to the particular consequences of error, conceit, hatred, passion, and fear. Error consists in mistaking irrational nature for a true soul reality. Conceit is the imagination that we may obtain deliverance by the exercise of our own personal power. Passion and hatred arise from desire and aversion to the five

objects of sense. Fear is seen in its most intense form in the contemplation of the approach of death and dread of ill arising from the loss through death of the five objects of sense.

We seek many false means of deliverance from these evils. We may, e.g., think that relief will come to us by an act of nature, or by the lapse of time, or by luck. Especially we may depend on the ritual observances ordained in the Vedas. But all these means are unavailing. Even Vedic practices are useless, for the reason that they are connected with 'impurity, destruction, and excess' (*Kārikā* 2). This same Sūtra points us in an entirely different direction—towards contemplation, and a 'discriminative knowledge of the Manifested, the Unmanifested, and the Knowing.' The same kind of recommendation is given in *Kārikā* 37: 'As it is intellect which accomplishes for Self fruition of all that is to be experienced, so it is that again which discriminates the subtle difference between Nature and Soul.'

In such a *śloka* as this are contained some of the root-conceptions of the Sāṅkhya philosophy and also indications of some of the chief differences between it and the Vedānta philosophy as derived from the Upanishads. If Deussen is right in speaking of the Sāṅkhya as a 'natural disintegration of the doctrine of the Upanishad,' this disintegration might be described as expressing itself in a philosophic dualism, arising from an attempt to give greater value to the realistic tendencies which may be found in the Upanishads. The doctrine of *Avidyā* is found to be unsatisfactory, especially when developed into the somewhat fuller concept of *māyā*. Nature cannot be explained by simply calling it an illusion. Some further answer must be given as to the whence of the phenomenal world. This world must have

had a cause, and the next step is to suppose that this cause lies in Nature herself, and that Nature must have existed from all eternity. As we read in *Kārikā* 3, 'Nature, the root, is not an effect' or 'Nature is not produced.' We thus reach the conception of an original matter, or *urstoff*, which the Sāṅkhya calls *prakṛiti*, and from which issues or develops the world of our ordinary consciousness. The Unmanifest or Indiscrete exists originally as a sort of homogeneous continuum, which we cannot describe for the simple reason that it is never an object of direct experience. It is, however, none the less real, for its reality is implied in the very admission that we cannot know it. It is the primal source of experience, held in equipoise by three forces (goodness, passion, darkness—*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*). Through the emergence of intelligence (*buddhi*) from some mysterious source, this equipoise is disturbed, and evolution commences after a manner somewhat akin to the Spencerian differentiation of the unstable homogeneous. Mr. S. C. Banerji, indeed, points out that the Sāṅkhya is superior to the Spencerian philosophy, inasmuch as the former regards the world-process as dependent on Intelligence. But, as no satisfactory explanation is given of the emergence of intelligence out of the original source (it is not shown as belonging either to nature or to soul), the conception is not a great improvement on that of Spencer.

The intelligence or general consciousness approaches nearer to concreteness and becomes the principle of individuality (*Ahaṁkāra*). From this again are evolved the five subtle elements and the receptive and active powers of man, ten in number, together with *Manas*, or Mind, the last-mentioned conception somewhat resembling Aristotle's common or central sense. Lastly come the five gross ele-

ments, the elements which we know as those of earth, water, fire, air and ether. It is possible also to describe these principles from another point of view, and say that *prakṛiti*, or nature, is evolvent only, the five gross elements are evolutes only, and the remainder are both evolvent and evolutes.

Thus we arrive at a view of nature which is a curious combination of materialism and idealism, though probably the materialistic element is predominant. The evolving nature has life within itself, and the problem for us is simply to realize that nature forms an independent system with which the human soul has no intrinsic connection. This independent nature has many qualities which we commonly but mistakenly attribute to soul. From this mistaken attribution all misery and all evil flow. The aim of our conscious endeavour is just to discover the essential distinction between soul and nature—to destroy the *aviveka* or 'want of discrimination.' The soul is bound up with *prakṛiti*, and erroneously thinks that this bondage must continue and that the consequent miseries are inevitable. But, in reality, all the qualities of ordinary experience—'virtue, dispassion, power, vice, ignorance, passion, weakness' are so many forms which the bondage assumes.

Knowledge is the one liberating force, and the aim of philosophy is to supply this knowledge by which we shall be able to realize the true nature of the soul. We shall find that each of the souls (*purushas*) is possessed of qualities like the Vedāntic Ātman, the difference being that the souls are now *many* instead of one. Further, each one is even more abstract than the sole Ātman of the Vedānta. The important point is that in its essence Soul is altogether distinct from nature, and that all personality and characterization are due to confusion.

Liberating knowledge consists in discovering that the soul is different from what it seems, that the connection with the non-ego is without reality, and that all modes of personality are merely temporary. In its essence the soul is altogether inactive, remaining apart, a 'spectator, solitary, passive'—neither evolvent nor evolute. This essential nature of the soul is best described in *Kārikā* 64: 'So, by a study of the principles is the final, incontrovertible and only one knowledge attained, that I am not, naught is mine, and the ego exists not.' According to Vigñāna Bhikshu the first clause here denies the agency of soul, the second denies its attachment to any objects, and the third denies its appropriation of any faculties.

Nature is an important ally in this search after a soul of a purely abstract character. We are told in *Kārikā* 59 that the 'evolution of nature from intellect to the special elements is for the deliverance of each soul; the activity, as if for itself, is for the benefit of another.' *Prakṛiti* thus comes to the aid of the soul, and the whole process of evolution takes place with a view to enabling the soul to discover its separateness. This process of nature is itself unconscious and without design, just as the milk of the cow is secreted unintelligently and yet serves the purpose of nourishing the calf. It is hardly necessary to point out that here we have an anticipation of Schopenhauer and also much the same degree of philosophical inadequacy. To ascribe processes to unconsciousness is pretty much the same as to confess that they are inexplicable, and the metaphor of the milk and the cow does not rid us of the difficulty, for neither the milk nor the cow are ultimate—they require an explanation beyond themselves.

This nature, though unconscious, is yet, in some

unaccountable manner, capable of desire, and this desire is wholly benevolent and directed towards the end of liberating the soul (cf. *Kārikās* 58–60). This benevolence, further, is of the highest quality, for it works without thinking of reward. No reward, indeed, can be given; for the soul has not sufficient character to be grateful. Cf *Kārikā* 60: 'Nature, generous and endowed with qualities, accomplishes by manifold means and without benefit to herself the purpose of soul, which is thankless and uncomposed of the constituents.' Nor is this benevolent service a means to any ulterior end. As soon as the end of emancipation is reached, nature ceases, just 'as a dancer, having exhibited herself upon the stage, ceases to dance' (59). The sufferings and evils for which nature is responsible cease even to be experienced, and the soul is left to its lonely beatitude, to a bliss which is very like that described in the Vedānta; only that in the Sāṅkhya it is the bliss of an individual and not of the Universal Brahman.

Now what is the effect of this philosophy on our view of life? It seems that, instead of the abstract idealism and Pantheism of the Vedānta, we have here a dualism which leads to a deeper pessimism, and that this dualism is due to the error, which is latent in Pantheism, of finding the Absolute reality either in nature as it actually exists or in a characterless abstraction wholly separate from nature. In our estimation of experience we have to give a certain amount of value to its *data*—and in striving to make this grudgingly-conceded reality consistent with itself we reach the conception of *prakṛiti*. Yet, when we estimate experience still more critically and take account of the facts of pain and evil, we see that all is not as it should be. We long for deliverance, and so we swing over to the opposite

extreme and reach the conception of the characterless *purusha*. But can these two conceptions live together in a consistent system? We maintain that they cannot, and that the result of the forced conjunction will be but to reveal more clearly the latent pessimism.

In order to come to terms with ordinary experience we have to ascribe reality to nature. Only thus can we avoid the uncomfortable consequences of such vague conceptions as *māyā* and *avidyā*. We, no doubt, in taking this step sacrifice the philosophical ideal of monism, but on the other hand we may compensate ourselves by making nature bear the burden of all the disabilities from which we wish to free our souls. Nature may act as a kind of scape-goat and be driven into the wilderness, bearing upon its head our misery and our sin. But in order to give any warrant to the hope that such deliverance may be possible, it is necessary to presuppose the complete detachment of the soul from nature. They are essentially disparate, and in the recognition of this, as we have seen, salvation lies.

With such a doctrine, however, we find ourselves immediately in difficulties. According to the Sāṅkhya doctrine the separation is not one which has actually to be brought about—it has only to be recognized, i.e. it is one which has existed from the beginning. But if this be so, it is difficult to see how the problems of life which are due to the mistaken mingling of nature and of soul can ever have arisen. If *purusha* and *prakṛiti* are separate from one another, there seems to be no need for deliverance, for they could never have got involved with one another in such a way as to bring about the illusions which cause the miseries of life.

But, putting aside the theoretical and logical difficulty, we may ask the further question, How,

if they are essentially separate, can soul and nature combine to bring about liberation? We are told that nature is illuminated and becomes active only in the presence of soul, and, on the other hand, soul has no activity in itself and is dependent for all movement on the exertions of nature. Here it would seem we have a case of a union which is both metaphysically impossible and ethically wrong. It is a case, in fact, of doing evil that good may come, with the additional difficulty that it is impossible to do the evil. We must not be led into a mistaken defence by the figure of the blind man and the lame. These two companions in disability unite because they need each other, because the one without the other would be incomplete. But two essentially disparate things, such as soul and body, cannot unite, and even if they could, they would be better separate. There can, at any rate, be no idea of the completion of one by the other. Further, why should they unite only in order that they may separate?—the whole process seems a futility.

Further, it seems impossible to admit nature as a friend or ally of the soul. Nature cannot at once be the source of evil and also provide the means of deliverance. The two aspects of friend and enemy, of ally and alien, are incompatible with one another. The Sāṅkhya philosophy must either give up the idea that the soul and nature are fundamentally alien to one another, or it must give up the attempt to imagine an alliance between them for the benefit of either the one or the other. And, seeing that the mental qualities by which the process of emancipation is started are somewhat arbitrarily imposed from without upon the conception of nature, it would seem that the aspect of nature as enemy or as alien is predominant in the Sāṅkhya.

Can we, then, find refuge in this conception of

nature as simply an alien inimical force, from which, after we have sufficiently loaded it with the evil of the world, we may detach ourselves ? It seems that we are here face to face with problems which we found insoluble from the point of view of the Vedānta, and that deliverance is sought for in much the same way. We may, e.g., try to show either that the enemy is not so formidable after all, or, secondly, that escape is possible and brings us into a region into which it is worth our while to enter.

In regard to the first endeavour, our difficulties are greater than those with which the Vedānta left us. For here—in the Sāṅkhya—the enemy is real and continues in an inimical attitude towards us. We cannot get rid of this disconcerting piece of objectivity by using the weapon of illusion, for we have already given hostages to experience and left to the enemy the care of the sick and incompetent parts of our soul. Withdrawal from an insecure position does not annihilate the enemy, as many a retreating general has found to his cost. The Sāṅkhya philosophy cannot legitimately argue that *prakṛiti* is nothing in itself, for in so doing he would surrender one of the most valuable elements in his system. No reality would be left to which the evil of the world could be attached, and this evil would again remain as a burden on the soul. The reality of *prakṛiti* must be acknowledged, because we cannot separate ourselves from a nonentity, and this reality must carry with it the evil, otherwise the separation is without purpose.

Other attempts have been made to minimize this otherwise useful dualism, and these attempts show incomplete contentment with deliverance by simple detachment from an intractable and alien mass of evil. Sometimes *prakṛiti* is described as the world of relativity merely, and this is regarded as ' healing

the dualistic lesion in the Sāṅkhyan thought.' As Worsley puts it : ' It is no longer necessary to conceive of *avyakta* as a reality eternally co-existent with the Supreme Spirit. Its otherness becomes simply perceptual, becomes the difference between a thing and its shadow, between the Absolute and the relative.' However accurate this may be as a description of certain tendencies in the Sāṅkhyan philosophy, the tendency towards idealism is an inconsistency within the system. It is impossible first to make *prakṛiti* bear the burden and then discharge it from service as unreality. We should then be involved once more in all the difficulties of Vedāntic idealism. The attempt to defend the Sāṅkhya in this way against the charge of dualism is interesting mainly as showing how impossible it is to find in the Sāṅkhya solution a permanent escape from the difficulties of the Vedānta. The Sāṅkhya is found to land us in difficulties from which, again, escape is sought by reaffirming the same Vedāntic principles which caused the difficulties from which originally we sought to escape.

Another evidence of reluctance to accept the full consequences of dualism is to argue that evil belongs neither to nature in itself nor to soul in itself, but only to their union. It is argued that the suffering and the evil which are alleged to be essentially bound up with the *prakṛiti*, come to her only as associated with *purusha*. But in answer to this we may push the matter a little further back. We may point out that, if evil is found in the combination, it must be present in one of the elements. But if we consider the essential nature of the *purusha*, manifested at the goal which it is ultimately to reach, we find that there is no hint of suffering or of evil there, nor any trace of fear, conceit, love, hatred,

[1] *Concepts of Monism*, p. 258.

from which suffering and evil might be supposed to come. We are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that the source of the disabilities and trials of life must be in the *prakṛiti* alone. Thus all attempts to minimize the importance of the enemy, or alter his inimical character, seem to fail. *Prakṛiti* remains real, alien and evil—in fact, an insoluble problem which must remain insoluble. Our attempts to attribute spiritual and mental qualities have served simply to set in clearer relief this mass of unintelligibility. The tendency of the whole thought-system is towards materialism and determinism. Pain and evil have not been dealt with and conquered. They remain; and there arises within us the subjective feeling of being in the grip of alien forces over which victory is impossible. Escape only is left.

But *is* escape left? Here, again, the answer must be almost altogether negative. As previously remarked, deliverance cannot be wrought out by nature alone. *Prakṛiti* cannot at once be the originator of evil and the deliverer from it. Even the mental qualities ascribed to nature avail us little. They are artificially imposed, and, being divorced from their true centre in soul, they are little but the hypostases of abstractions. If *prakṛiti* is impossible, is it then any more possible to derive from *purusha* the power which we need for escape? Again our answer is in the negative. In the first place, we find ourselves involved in the dilemma that, if the soul is involved in the struggle, there must be some community of nature between her and *prakṛiti*, and absolute separation becomes then impossible; on the other hand, if the soul is not involved in the struggle, all the processes towards deliverance leave the soul entirely unaffected. Again, even if we dismiss this dilemma as mere

logical hair-splitting, the soul itself is essentially without energy—a 'passive inert spectator.' It is described in the *Tattva Samāsa* as follows: 'The *purusha* is without beginning, it is subtle, omnipresent, perceptive, without qualities, eternal, seer, experiencer, *not an agent*, knower of object, spotless, *not-producing*.' The qualities of passivity are here sufficiently emphasized. No free will can be ascribed to the Self and no origination of motion. 'The fool imagines that he himself is the agent, although in reality he is unable by himself even to bend a straw.' [1]

Further, the very proof of the existence of souls is unsatisfying—at least the proof of the existence of such a soul as has just been described. The proof is given in *Kārikā* 17: 'Since the assemblage of sensible things is for the sake of another . . . since there must be superintendence, since there must be an enjoyer, and since there is striving for isolation, soul exists.' Here one of the arguments is that the existence of souls is proved because the assemblage of sensible objects is for another's use, and because, if there are things enjoyable, there must be some one to enjoy them. But the acceptance of this as a proof of the existence of soul would involve an entire reconstruction of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. It is only a relative soul which could be proved in this manner—the kind of soul which is due to want of discrimination. The soul to which existence in the most real meaning of the word can alone be ascribed is entirely out of connection with the assemblage of sensible objects and, therefore, cannot be proved on the ground of such a connection. The same remarks apply to the necessity of superintendence and the yearning for release. The Sāṅkhya philosopher is here, no doubt, better than

[1] Cf. Worsley, *Concepts of Monism*, p. 187.

his presuppositions. He has indicated the existence and the way to prove the existence of a more actual soul, but not of the soul which alone he thinks worthy of existence. He has established the reality only of the soul which we must leave behind, and not of the soul which we must attain unto by way of absolute separation from *prakṛiti*. The soul, which, by the presuppositions of the philosophy, is alone ultimately real, cannot be shown to have existence, and even if it did exist it would be powerless to effect our deliverance.

This conclusion is strengthened by the consideration that the Sāṅkhya lays almost exclusive stress upon a plurality of souls. In it we may notice that the proof of this multiplicity is also unsatisfactory. Plurality, we are told, is obvious from the different allotment of birth, death, &c., and the variety of occupations which fill up our lives. But surely these differences apply only to the outer shell of our souls, or to our souls in an unenlightened state, and they are of no value for proving, as against the Vedāntists, the plurality of real souls. Further, the conception of a plurality of non-qualitative souls is inconsistent with itself, contradicting, as it does, the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. We are bound to ask how plurality may be discovered if there are no qualitative differences whatsoever. Again, the Sāṅkhya sometimes speaks of a generic unity of souls; but it is impossible to speak of a genus without species, and species are inconceivable unless they can be distinguished from one another.

It is of greater importance to observe that the Sāṅkhyan emphasis upon individual souls involves an unmistakable tendency towards atheism, and that the individual souls are thus deprived of the help of the Divine in their struggle for deliverance. If we are impressed by the problematical character

of the individual souls, we cannot fall back, as even in the Vedānta, on the idea that, at all events, God exists. We have just referred to the conception of a generic unity, and have shown that this is pretty much an abstraction and cannot in itself save us from atheism. It may be urged by the defenders of the Sāṅkhya philosophy that the only God who is denied is the qualitative God, similar to the Īśvara of the Upanishads, but if all that is retained for us is an abstract generic unity, it is difficult to escape an almost exclusive emphasis upon individual souls.

So these individual souls, uncertain of their own existence, are left helpless and isolated in their struggle with the difficulties of life. The Sāṅkhya has been described as issuing in ' human apotheosis,' but the result might equally well be described as human loneliness. We might ask the further question whether, even if these souls could, out of their vague abstract character, find power sufficient for success in the struggles of life, they are the kind of souls we should desire to have. Are they the souls we know, are they the souls which are active in our higher experiences of morality ? The Sāṅkhya admission is that the ' attainment of adequate knowledge renders virtue and the rest inoperative.' The soul is isolated, unable to do either good or bad—a witness only and not a doer. We must here again, as in the Vedānta, leave behind us the moral predicates, and we seem to have little left. The attainment, at the best, is purely negative, —the extinction of unhappiness, rather than positive completion of the soul. As it has been put, ' The description given of the soul tends to make it an entity of no consequence whatsoever—in fact a nonentity. The soul is without volition, without intelligence in the proper sense of the term, without

sensibility—a lump of passivity and quiescence'.[1] ; or, as Davies puts it : 'The grandeur of the soul in Kapila's system is unreal and useless. It has no moral elevation, it knows nothing of virtue and vice as connected with itself. It has no purpose beyond itself. It directs in some undefined degree, but it never condescends to work, either for itself or for others. It has no sympathy. Its highest state is one of perfect abstraction from matter and from other souls ; a self-contained life, wherein no breath of emotion ever breaks in on the placid surface.'[2]

Thus the soul which we have striven to deliver turns out to be hardly worth delivering. God has disappeared from our philosophy, and we have nothing else left save the inexorable process of nature—an alien power from which we struggle in vain to escape. Again, we are forced to the conclusion that, if we are to obtain salvation, we must look for it in another direction. We must seek an understanding of our world and of our ordinary experience in it. We must engage in conflict if necessary ; and the issue of the conflict must be victory, not flight, if our souls are to win contentment. The pessimism of the Sāṅkhya is deeper than that of the Vedānta because our natural environment is more substantialized and therefore more inevitable, even to the point of oppressiveness ; and, on the other hand, there is little of actuality and little of divinity in the souls we wish to deliver from it. Yet this pessimism seems to be an exceedingly likely outcome from the Pantheism of the Vedānta, which identifies God and the world and is thus unable to avoid the extreme of naturalism on the one hand or of vacuity on the other. The Sāṅkhya

[1] R. C. Bose, *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 150.
[2] *Hindu Philosophy*, p. 112.

might thus be taken as an object-lesson of the effect of these extremes on our sense of the value of life.

Little would be gained for our purpose by a review of the other systems of Indian philosophy. They do not afford us any new point of view from which we may reconstruct a system of thought capable of giving more than negative results. They seem rather to be a series of unsuccessful attempts to deal with the difficulties in which Pantheism lands us. They have got away, indeed, from the unitary position of Pantheism, but they have not left behind them the intellectualistic tendency, neither have they got rid of the practical fallacies inherent in Pantheism—the fallacies of acquiescence in determinism and fatalism and the expectation of a merely negative and abstract deliverance.

The *Yoga* system, identified with the name of Patañjali, whose date is usually given as the second century B.C., introduced little change into the presuppositions of the Sāṅkhyan philosophy. The name given to Patañjali's system—the Theistic Sāṅkhya—indicates at once the similarity and the difference. It is true that Patañjali elaborated also certain practices of ascetic ritual by which the detachment of the soul from nature might be brought about, but the discussion of these ritual practices hardly enters into a purely philosophical treatment. The main point of difference which concerns us here is the belief in a personal God or Iśvara; which belief Patañjali, either with diplomatic or with truly philosophical and religious motives, added to his exposition of Sāṅkhya doctrines. The question is whether this theism exercised any great influence on his system or provided any escape from the many difficulties connected with the Sāṅkhya philosophy. Opinions have varied

greatly as to the relative value of his conception of a personal God, but on the whole we must come to the conclusion that he did not relate it very closely to the rest of his system. We cannot say that this Supreme soul is the originator of the lesser souls, for they possess eternity as well as He. At best He occupies a position of foremost amongst equals. He is a perfectly pure soul, who is composed of goodness only without intermixture of other qualities, and who has, therefore, never become entangled in the world-process. He does not require deliverance. So He may stand to other souls in the relation of an exemplar—a pattern of what they ought to be and wish to be. Indeed, His very existence may be supported on the same grounds—as the response to a natural craving of the mind for perfection. As good implies better, so better implies a Best. Thus we are at liberty to speak of a Supreme Soul, but this Supreme Soul or Īśvara remains a pattern merely, and, as such, is merely one of the *means* by which we may discover our separation from nature. The main emphasis of Patañjali's system is still laid upon this separation, and the more positive religious motives of union with the Supreme and absolute devotion to Him have by no means an important place. The goal is not union with deity, but absolute separation of the soul from matter. We have advanced little beyond the Sāṅkhya point of view, and therefore the criticisms of that system already brought forward may be applied also to the greater part of the teaching of Patañjali.

We have seen how difficult it was for the defenders of the Vedānta to distinguish between the vague character of their absolute entity and the nothingness of the Buddhist; and to a very short consideration of the Buddhistic point of view we may now

devote one or two paragraphs. Śaṅkara is vehement in his desire to differentiate his philosophy from that of the Buddhists, going even the length of asserting that Buddha was a 'man given to making incoherent assertions, or else that a hatred of all beings induced him to propound absurd doctrines by accepting which they would become thoroughly confused.' He further says that 'Buddha's doctrine has to be entirely disregarded by those who have a regard for their own happiness' (*Sūtras*, ii. 28). But this vehemence of Śaṅkara's denial is, as we have seen, hardly supported by sufficiently cogent arguments on behalf of the Vedāntic position which he interprets. Pfleiderer is probably right in saying that the acosmism involved in the Upanishads leads by 'inevitable dialectic' to the Buddhist atheism, and Śaṅkara was influenced by Buddhism to a greater extent than he was willing to admit. For the philosophers of this school the ultimate of thought is Nirvāṇa and the goal is absorption into nothingness. Thus we seem with them to reach even a lower degree of depression, for the conception of *moksha* or deliverance, associated with the philosophy of the Upanishads is a distinctly more cheerful conception than that of Nirvāṇa.

As in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, so in the Buddhist —the main stress is laid upon distinction from the ordinary course of events—a mere 'leaving behind' of the sources of pain and misery. But our ordinary experience is conceived in an even less satisfactory manner than in the Vedānta and the Sānkhya. The point of view is one of psychological sensationalism. Everything is momentary, and with regard to the momentary the conception of practical efficiency is inadmissible. The sensational world is a mere aggregate or succession of impressions, productive of pain and worthy only of annihilation out of our

consciousness. Everything is empty and void of real existence. As Mādhavāchārya puts it, 'The doctrine of Buddha terminates in that of a total void (universal baselessness or nihilism) by a slow progression like the intrusive steps of a mendicant, through the position of a momentary flux, and through the gradual negation of the illusory assurances of pleasurable sensibility, of universality, of reality.'[1] When by meditation we can reach this point of view, the evil and misery of the world cease to trouble us. We discover that nothing is really good or evil except as artificially illumined by our thought. We may, therefore, deaden our desires, and, freeing ourselves from the ignorance which causes our individual existence, become reabsorbed in the formlessness from which we originally emerged. But in all this process we reach nothing permanent. Our mistake has lain in taking for durable that which is really transitory. But we discover that the durable to which knowledge would bring us turns out to be little better than nothingness, and so our pessimism is unrelieved.

Of the remaining philosophies we need consider only the *Nyāya*. True to the prevailing tendency towards intellectualism, this philosophy lays all stress upon the logical faculty. Right knowledge of the various topics brought forward for discussion will lead to emancipation, annihilating 'pain, birth, activity, faults, false notions.' We may begin with the attempt to annihilate the last-mentioned, and we shall find that the procedure is regressive, each annihilation leading to the annihilation of that which immediately precedes it on the list. One of the false notions is 'thinking the body,' or remaining in the mistake that the body belongs to us. If we can get

[1] *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha*, p. 22.

rid of this we shall get rid of desires which are based upon the false idea that anything is really agreeable or disagreeable. With the cessation of desire comes the cessation of activity, and this denial leads to a denial of merit, with its consequent necessity for rebirth. With the annihilation of birth, again, comes the annihilation of pain, so absolutely that nothing corresponding to it can again arise. The final state is described as 'final bliss'—a 'state of tranquil unconscious passivity in which all thought and emotion and the sense of personality have passed away for ever.' The mournful tone of this description of the utmost we can hope for will dispose us to believe that we must not confuse this bliss with happiness in the ordinary sense of the term. There is nothing positive about this bliss, and moreover, ordinary happiness is always mixed with pain, as honey may be mixed with poison, whereas this bliss, though negative, is pure. Ordinary happiness may be increased or decreased, with the result that, when we have little, we long for the 'more' which we once had or which we may look for. Happiness requires much toil and trouble in the procuring of it, and when we have obtained it, it is subject to all the vicissitudes of fortune. Happiness is, in fine, so impossible that 'any attempt to establish it as the *summum bonum* is only like the man who would try to grasp a red-hot ball of iron under the delusion that it was gold.' [1]

The metaphysical position of the *Nyāya* philosophy is difficult to describe. Gotama (the Nyāya philosopher) refuses to admit the illusory character of the world, and he also disclaims the position that the qualities of *prakṛiti* become effective only when it is illuminated by the presence of soul. He seems to ascribe to the qualities of matter, disconcerting

[1] *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha*, p. 171.

and painful though these may be, a more permanent and therefore a more oppressive reality than in some of the other systems. It is true that he sets over against this a belief in God as the 'maker and former' of all things, but this world, when created, seems to be surrendered almost altogether to the working of relentless laws of Karma, which do not lead to any very comfortable result. 'God's action in creation is indeed caused solely by compassion, but the idea of a creation which shall consist only of happiness is inconsistent with the nature of things, since there cannot but arise eventual differences from the different results which will ripen from the good or evil actions of the beings who are to be created.'[1] There is no confidence that any activity on the part of either God or man will produce any change in the chain of cause and effect. The nature of things, though it is compared to the body of God and we are given the hint that it may possibly carry out His purposes, yet is for the most part considered as limiting His power, and, as regards us, is a vague alien force against which it is vain to struggle. Deliverance is the utmost we can hope for, and even the possibility of this deliverance is somewhat doubtful. We are constrained to ask, in conclusion, the question which Mādhavāchārya put to the defenders of this system, 'Is not your definition of the *summum bonum* as much beyond our reach as the treacle on the elbow is to the tongue?'[2]

Our short sketch of Indian philosophies other than the Vedānta seems to leave us with the impression of a general pessimism. We do not contend, of course, that these systems we have passed in review are properly pantheistic systems. Our argument is, however, that they have em-

[1] *Sarva-darśana-saṅgraha*, p. 178. [2] Op. cit., p. 167.

phasized tendencies which are implicit in Pantheism and that, because they have not sufficiently separated themselves from the procedure of Pantheism, they have arrived at the same pessimistic result. They illustrate the opinion which our study of the Vedānta has led us gradually to form—viz. that neither intellect nor mystical emotion can of themselves effect our deliverance. They do not allow us to reach a conception of God which will afford a basis for a belief in the reality or purpose of the world-process. Unless we can abandon the pantheistic identification of God and the world, with its accompanying erroneous presentation of the relation between the human and the divine, we shall simply abide amongst the ruins of Pantheism. The other philosophies are to a certain extent illustrations of abiding amongst the ruins. They represent attempts to find satisfaction in either an abstract unity on the one hand, or incoherent or at least mechanical multiplicity on the other. But in neither conception can we maintain the inherent value of our own personality, from neither can we derive support for a belief in human freedom or in progress. All that is left us is acquiescence in the world-process or ineffectual attempts at flight from it. There is no promise of victory over the world, and there cannot be until we gain a better understanding both of ourselves and of the world than Pantheism permits us.

We may now consider for a little more popular manifestations of Indian philosophical and religious thought, and attempt to discover whether in these popular manifestations there are signs of Pantheism, and, if so, what is its effect upon the general attitude to life. The first of the more popular works we shall take up is the *Bhagavadgītā*.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PANTHEISTIC SPIRIT IN THE *BHAGAVADGĪTĀ*

We may now turn from the more purely philosophical literature and consider the popular religious poem known as the *Bhagavadgītā* or the 'Lord's Song'—a poem which at the present day exercises a unique influence over the people of India. It might be said that, while the Vedas and the Upanishads are valued as sacred possessions handed down from the past, they are not studied in proportion to their felt value. But the *Gītā* is both valued and read, and, for practical importance, holds the first place amongst the works of Sanskrit literature. Throughout the centuries it has been the predominating influence upon Indian educated thought, and to-day it is still a living book, of much more than historical interest, and read by countless numbers in every part of India. As Prof. Garbe says, 'It has become the sum of all wisdom to the cultured Indian.'[1] The study of the *Gītā* should, therefore, throw much light upon the transition from ancient to modern tendencies, and the consideration of any pantheistic elements there may be in it will be of the utmost value for the estimation of the influence of Pantheism upon the whole current of Indian thought.

The *Gītā* is a subsection of a section of the *Mahābhārata*, the section being the *Bhīshma Parvan*,

[1] *Monist*, October 1913.

and the subsection (of eighteen chapters out of thirty) being known as the *Bhagavadgītā parvan*. The setting of the poem is so well known that we need hardly refer to it. It is the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra, the chief episode in the war between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍava heroes, is in his war chariot, and has as his charioteer the god Kṛishṇa, who has assumed human form. As the battle is about to commence, Arjuna is seized with misgivings. After all, it is an inter-family feud; and how can he slay his kinsmen? Kṛishṇa undertakes to adjust the thoughts of the troubled warrior, and, in so doing, sets forth the system of religion and philosophy which we have in this great poem.

The setting of the poem is not, of course, historical. Apart from the intrinsic improbability of such a discourse having been delivered on a battle-field on the exciting eve of a great battle, there are many other objections to historicity. Kṛishṇa, as represented in the *Gītā*, is the result of a long process of development, in the course of which the ally of the Pāṇḍavas, the warrior and religious teacher, has received deification, comes to be regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu, and is finally identified with the Brahman of the Vedānta philosophy. Now, the battle of Kurukshetra is supposed to have been fought about the time of the compilation of the Vedas. If, then, such doctrines as those set forth in the *Gītā* had been promulgated on the field of Kurukshetra, they could hardly fail to have influenced succeeding literature. But, as a matter of fact, we have no reference in early times to Kṛishṇa as the incarnation of Brahman. If he is referred to at all in later Vedic literature or in the Upanishads or the Sūtras, it is rather as a man or hero or demigod, and never as the Supreme Being.

Much controversy has raged round the question of the date of the *Gītā*. No competent authorities now attempt to regard it as historically assignable to the period of the battle of Kurukshetra; but, even if it is brought down to a later date, there is still room for much difference of opinion as to how *much* later this date ought to be. Justice Telang may be taken as a representative of those who press for an early date. He concludes, both from external and internal evidence, that the date must be earlier than the third century B.C., but does not venture upon a more definite decision. The internal evidence which he adduces is the more important of the two kinds of evidence. He urges that the *Gītā* belongs to an age prior to that of system-building, and that its thought is free and unfettered by any fear of inconsistencies. Inconsistencies are numerous and varied. At one time knowledge is put higher than devotion, and at another time the order is reversed (cf. vi. 46 and vii. 16). At one point Kṛishṇa declares (ix. 29): 'there is none whom I hate, none whom I love,' and at another point (xii. 19) he says that 'one who holds in equal account blame and praise, silent, content with whatsoever befall, is a man *dear to me*.' Mr. Telang argues that these and many other similar contradictions are signs of an age of innocence, when men were unaware of contradictions and made no attempt to get rid of them and replace them by systematic thought. He finds much similarity between the point of view of the *Gītā* and the earlier Upanishads. Both they and it take up much the same attitude towards works of a ritual character, and seem to regard the Vedas as containing only instructions upon ritual matters. The expression of such an opinion in the *Gītā* would seem to imply that, at the time it was written, the Upanishads had not yet risen into prominence

as an integral part of the sacred literature. There is indeed one mention of the word 'Vedānta' (xv. 15); but Mr. Telang takes this to refer to the *Āraṇyakas*, which are earlier than the doctrinal treatises now known as the Upanishads.

Another of Mr. Telang's arguments has reference to the attitude to caste taken up in the *Gītā*. Caste is based upon the possession of certain religious and moral qualities rather than upon descent. (Cf. iv. 13.) In a later passage (xviii. 41-45) emphasis is laid upon the performance of certain duties—spiritual duties by the Brāhmans, duties of valour by the Kshatriyas, agricultural duties by the Vaiśyas, and duties of service by the Śūdras. Mr. Telang therefore argues that the *Gītā* belongs to an earlier age than, say, the *Laws of Manu*, in which the institution of caste has become solidified and hereditary, largely because of the increasing influence of the Brāhmans and their monopoly of the right to perform the ritual inculcated in the Brahmanical writings. Closely connected with this point is Mr. Telang's theory of the relations of the *Gītā* and Buddhism respectively to Brahmanism. If it be the case, as Mr. Telang argues, that the *Gītā* represents a more fluid theory of caste than that indicated in later works like the *Laws of Manu*, we may also urge that it represents the earliest protest against the growing power of the Brāhmans. Buddhism is also an attack on current Hinduism, only far more thorough-going. The question then is, which attack is the earlier? It might be possible to look upon the *Gītā* as the work of one who, having taken fright at the revolutionary tendencies of Buddhism, was desirous of upholding the old system by introducing certain moderate reforms within it. Mr. Telang rejects this hypothesis on the ground that the *Gītā*, with all its moderation,

is yet far too negative to be regarded as a defence. The line of development is much more naturally described if we take the *Gītā* as the first tentative effort at reform, which was carried afterwards to greater length in the teaching of Buddha and his disciples. The development might be compared to that which took place in the Brahmoism of the nineteenth century—from the moderate reformation associated with the name of Raja Ram Mohan Roy to the more thorough-going revolution of religious thought represented in the teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen.

It is obvious, however, that Mr. Telang's argument for the early date of the *Gītā* does not represent the only possible point of view. The inconsistencies in the *Gītā* may be otherwise interpreted. They may show an eclectic spirit which has not been altogether successful in its eclecticism. In other words they may belong, not to an age of philosophic innocence, unconscious of the contradictions and prior to the formation of philosophical systems, but to a later age when the various systems have long been current and their contradictions have become only too glaring. It would be fitting that an attempt should be made to soften these contradictions by bringing them together into the same philosophico-religious work, even if this should not contain a compact and closely reasoned system. Again, the attitude to caste taken up in the *Gītā* might represent a *revolt* against an oppressive caste system rather than a preliminary development towards such a system. Again, we are by no means convinced by Mr. Telang's argument as to the priority of the *Gītā* to the reforms of Buddha. It seems at least as probable—if not more probable—that the intense conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism may have made men uneasy and so have

produced a spirit of eclecticism, anxious to find some such *via media* as is offered in the *Gītā*.

Though, however, we may adopt a somewhat critical attitude towards Mr. Telang's argument for an early date, we must not go to the opposite extreme and demand a date so late as to allow of considerable borrowing from the Christian scriptures. There are undoubtedly many similarities, especially between the *Gītā* and St. John's Gospel, but there is no sufficient evidence of *direct* borrowing, and therefore no sufficient ground for an argument from these similarities. The judgment of scholars has moved away considerably from the position taken up by Dr. F. Lorinsen in 1869, who found traces of much borrowing, and the tendency now is to regard the theistic teaching of the *Gītā* as a natural development which took place within the limits of Indian thought itself.

The most satisfying view as to the development of thought indicated in the *Gītā* is that associated with the name of Professor Garbe. The form in which we now possess the *Gītā* is not its original form, but is the result of a synthesis. In its original form the *Gītā* might be described as the text-book of the Bhāgavata sect, who in the exposition of their doctrines had already taken the help of the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies. The worship of the Bhāgavatas had originally centred in Kṛishṇa, who came to be regarded as an incarnation of Vishṇu, and was in this respect frequently known by the name of Vāsudeva. It is suggested by Dr. Barnett that Vāsudeva was originally a tribal god who was identified with Vishṇu perhaps earlier than Kṛishṇa, and, later, shared with the latter a common inheritance of legends.[1] The core of the poem is therefore theistic, but an adjustment was made

[1] Cf. *Introduction to Gītā*, p. 51.

between this theism and the current philosophies, especially the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga. Of these two the Yoga, because of its faith in a personal God and its more definitely ethical tendencies, had the greater attraction for the author of the *Gītā*. But a further adjustment had to be made between the theistic elements and the Vedāntic Pantheism, in order to provide a point of contact between the Bhāgavatas and the Brāhmans when the latter had succeeded in attracting the former to their faith. The result is that, besides the personal God of the original *Gītā*, we have an impersonal non-qualitative God—Brahman in the absolute sense; and the world, which according to the original form of the doctrine was a real emanation from the Supreme, becomes a *māyā*, an illusion, trembling always on the verge of reabsorption. The two conceptions stand side by side, and were formulated in the existing work in the course of the first two centuries A.D. There is little attempt to bring the two aspects into organic unity with one another, but yet they exercise considerable mutual influence. It is with the influence of the Vedāntic Pantheism upon the theistic elements in the *Gītā* that we have to do; and our suggestion is that the influence of the theistic teaching was greatly hampered by the presence of the philosophical elements drawn from Vedāntic, Sāṅkhyan, and Yoga sources.

But, first of all, let us attempt to set forth the theistic elements in this composite whole. We have already seen that the belief which is presented in the *Gītā* is the culmination of a long development from primitive trust in a warrior leader to faith in a personal Supreme Spirit. Kṛishṇa, the warrior and prophet, becomes identified with Vishṇu and Vāsudeva, and, when we meet with him in the *Gītā*, is just on the point of being identified with

the *All-God* of the Vedānta philosophy. He is not, however, as yet conceived in the abstract manner of the Vedānta. He is as yet full of qualities which we may describe with clearness sufficient to constitute him a definite object of worship. He is supreme over the world, and from him the world of matter proceeds. Matter has not such an independent existence as in the Sāṅkhya philosophy, neither has it merely relative and illusory existence as in the Vedānta. God, or Kṛishṇa-Vāsudeva, is the creative source of a real world of spirits and of matter. Even if we cannot say that matter is part of the being of God, we can at least say that he plants within it the germ of development and works in it and through it. In xiv. 3 there is an attempt to hold together the two conceptions of a material source and a vivifying principle. Kṛishṇa is represented as the originator of all that is effective in matter—as, in other words, responsible for the bringing of matter from the position of a mere negative into the position of a real being. He sets the germ in the 'great Brahman,' i.e. in the primal, indeterminate matter, and 'thence spring all born beings.' God also sustains and controls the universe which he has made, being both transcendent and immanent in regard to it. He is the essence of all the phenomena of the actual world—the light of the sun and the moon and the fire and the sound of the ether vibration, 'the understanding of them that understand, the splendour of the splendid' (vii. 10), the first of gods and men, the chief of rishis, saints, and priests (cf. x. 20-25). He is also to be identified with death, which 'ravishes all' (x. 34), which phrase indicates the cyclic character of the Kṛishṇaic creation. At the end of the age all things return to him (viii. 18. 19), yet not for final dissolution, but to be produced again. In the

same verse as has been just quoted from, Kṛishṇa is described as 'the Source of all that is to be.' Notwithstanding this close connection with the processes of nature, the Supreme Power acts in a somewhat cold and indifferent manner. He has no *desire* to manifest himself in activity. Works affect him not, or—in the somewhat stronger language of the *Gītā*—'works defile him not' (iv. 14). He thus remains outside the chain of causes and effects in passionless calm.

We obtain, however, a more definitely theistic impression on considering the relation of God to his worshippers and to the world of men generally. Here we approach the conception of divine grace, and the answering conception of *bhakti*, or warm confiding devotion to God on the part of man. In reference to human society God appears as a redeemer,—'Whenever there is a decay of the law and an ascendancy of lawlessness, I create myself. For the protection of the good and the destruction of evil-doers, and for the establishment of the law, I am born age after age' (iv. 8). The repeated incarnation of the Supreme, in the person of Kṛishṇa and otherwise, is explained by a strongly ethical purpose of grace. Towards individuals also Kṛishṇa is compassionate. At the request of Arjuna he manifests his form in all its splendour and majesty, and the relation between worshipper and worshipped is such that Arjuna can beseech Kṛishṇa to bear with him 'as father with son, as comrade with comrade, as lover with spouse' (xi. 44). Of the sincere worshipper Kṛishṇa says: 'None shall be dearer to me than he' (xviii. 69), and he promises freedom from sin and detachment from the confusions of the world. If the worshippers will come to him in the attitude of *bhakti*, putting complete trust in him, giving him the utmost love and worship,

keeping him ever in their thoughts even to the house of death, seeing him in all objects of devotion and preferring him above all others, they will attain peace, the ' bright lamp of knowledge ' will be lit for them and they will reach ' supreme adeptship '—everlasting bliss. Sometimes the final stage is represented as ' extinction in Kṛishṇa ' (vi. 15), but more often the love which has been manifested towards individuals is continued in the continuance of their individuality in a condition of blessed communion with God.

If we now turn to the influence upon the theistic position of the philosophic borrowings the author seems to have felt himself compelled to make, the question at once recurs: How is it possible to combine the varying systems—Sāṅkhya, Yoga, and Vedānta—into one view and estimate their joint effect? Though the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga have many points in common, they are by no means identical with one another, and the difference again between even their common elements and the Vedānta teaching is great. How, then, can we treat them together and attempt to estimate their joint influence?

It might be said, as we have seen in last chapter, that Pantheism has either failed to meet the problems of dualism already existent or has itself resulted in dualism. If we identify God and the world, we find that, sooner or later, either God is swallowed up in the world or the world is negated in God. Both phases of the tendency are represented in the group of philosophies under consideration. If we try to place ourselves in the centre of them, we find ourselves also in the mental situation in which the problem of Pantheism was set. We find ourselves face to face with a dualism which is for Pantheism an unresolved problem, an evidence of

its want of success. But, in this particular case of the *Gītā* and its constituent elements, not only did Pantheism fail to solve the problem, but it also hindered a solution from the side of theism. The theistic enterprise is paralysed, and is either unable seriously to face the dualism or has to be content with a facile solution which ultimately leaves the dualism more disconcerting than before. The ordinary consciousness, when face to face with human experience, may feel, in popular language, that all is right with the world or, in philosophico-theological language, that all is divine. But soon contradictions make themselves felt, and the solutions of these contradictions may be found in flight. The world of nature is to be left behind by the human soul and also by the divine soul. Nature has its own laws and will work according to these laws whatever we may do. Our highest wisdom is to recognize our detachment, to realize that none of the qualities which bind us to ordinary experience really belong to us. This is the stage of thought represented in the Sāṅkhya and Yoga elements in the *Gītā*. But having thus divested the soul of all superfluous qualities, we may regard ourselves as having reached its fundamental elements, or, in general terms, as having reached reality, and the further emphasis upon identification with the divine is easily secured under the influence of the unifying spirit of the Upanishads. This identification may fill us with a certain amount of delusive contentment, but it does not send us back to the world again so that we may cancel our detachment, reform the world and resolve the dualism; and in these considerations we see the measure of its failure and the secret of its pessimism.

We have already found traces of the influence of the Sāṅkhya philosophy in the detachment of

God from the world and in the conception of nature proceeding according to its own processes. 'Works are done entirely by the modes of nature,' God seems to exist merely for the purpose of implanting the germ of activity in nature, and in order to provide an objective towards which men may flee when they realize their essential separateness from nature. Salvation is obtained when a man realizes this separateness and submits himself to the working of the cosmic principle. The ideal is that he should treat the world-process with indifference. But before he can reach this attitude of indifference, he will have to pass through an intermediate phase of thought in which the nature which he cannot now interpret as akin to his spirit will manifest itself as a relentless might. The mood of fatalism will precede in the individual mind the mood of indifference, and the confession of helplessness will come before the defiant assertion of insouciance. There are many illustrations of this sense of the oppressiveness of nature—of the moods of nature which perform all the work in an endless process of evolution and devolution. Even God becomes again identified with the relentless movement. Cf. xi. 32 : 'I am Time that makes worlds to pass away, waxing full and working here to compass the world's destruction.' And this world-force presses with all its might upon the individual life. By it the warriors whom Arjuna hesitates to slay have already been given to death, and the same might will compel Arjuna to fight whether he wishes to or not. Cf. xviii. 59 : 'This thy resolve is vain. *Nature will drive thee*.' Every human being is insignificant in the presence of the world-forces, and is fit only to be 'spun about as though set upon a whirligig' (xviii. 61).

In the face of this world-might the only possible

attitude, according to the teaching of the *Gītā*, is one of indifference. If we cannot resist, we may simply submit and make the submission of as little consequence as possible by arguing that the soul is really unaffected by all the happenings amongst outward things. We may allow the world-processes to have their way with physical and social relationships. They constitute, after all, only the shell of our souls, and it matters not what happens to the shell, whether this be our own or other people's. We may slay our friends in battle without compunction, reflecting that it is only their bodies which have an end (ii. 18). To take an interest in anything mundane is unfitting. 'It is not well to sorrow for any born things' (ii. 30). There is on the one hand no reason for sorrow in the objective fate of those who perish. Life in any case is an unmeaning misery, and 'if we free men from life we shall do them good' (ii. 32). Subjectively also, sorrow is unfitting because it indicates unreasonable attachment to the world-process. Let us realise that the world is a vast system of necessity, in which every one must fulfil his function and meet his appropriate fate, whether he will or not. Let us therefore take up the attitude of indifference. Let us leave behind 'all the loves that dwell in the mind, and remain without affection for aught' (ii. 55, 57). Let our every motion be 'void of love and purpose' (iv. 19), and let us 'leave behind both good works and ill' (ii. 50). Thus shall we become 'indifferent to honour and dishonour, indifferent to the interests of friend and foe, renouncing all undertakings' (xiv. 25), and 'attain to the spirit of the Ultimate, who is indifferent also to all born beings' (ix. 29).

Thus, in this part of the *Gītā*, we find traces of the same indifferentism, the same sense of futility

and fatalism, the same coldness of attitude to ordinary experiences and relationships which have been discovered in connection with the Upanishads and the Vedānta, and we argue that this is a collateral if not a consequent phase of the unsatisfied craving for identity and the neglect of the possibility of transforming the world which are characteristic of the more formal philosophy. We have an additional evidence of the impossibility of finding satisfaction in mere identification with the world, and the effort to find relief in mere detachment is an extremely natural consequence.

Two methods of attaining the attitude of detachment are indicated in the *Gītā*, and here we come to a certain divergence between the influence of the Sāṅkhya and the Yoga. Consideration is given both to the 'Knowledge-rule of the School of the Count' and 'the Work-rule of the School of the Rule' (iii. 3). The Sāṅkhyans are represented as arguing that it is by knowledge only that we can win emancipation from matter. The Yogins, on the other hand, argue that it is by works, culminating in pious meditation and devotion.

The general opinion is that the methods of both knowledge and works are advocated in the *Gītā*, but that preference is given to disinterested action. But Śaṅkara, in his commentary on the *Gītā*, contends that such an opinion would be a mistake. He will not admit even that the two methods may be placed on a level with each other. He argues that, if this were permissible, Arjuna's question in iii. 1 would be unmeaning. It would be inconsistent to say that the 'conjunction of knowledge and works is intended for all, and at the same time to ask which is superior. It would be just as reasonable to ask, when a physician has prescribed a draught composed of two ingredients, which alone

of the ingredients will be efficacious.'[1] Consequently Śaṅkara concludes that the teaching of the *Gītā* is that 'Salvation is attained by knowledge alone, not by knowledge conjoined with works.'[2] He further argues that ii. 21 teaches that action is impossible in the case of the enlightened man, and that therefore the acts which are enjoined by scripture are meant only for the unenlightened. Action is, of course, not useless, seeing that the path of knowledge is possible only for a select few, and, besides, devotion to action may be a preliminary to devotion to knowledge. In his interpretation of xii. 12, Śaṅkara gives what he conceives to be the true relation of the two methods. According to him, this passage puts abandonment of the fruit of works (or performance of works with abandonment of fruits) at the top of a scale of merit only with reference to an unenlightened man who cannot follow the higher paths. The idea would be that knowledge is best of all; but, if this is impossible, then meditation should be chosen, and, if this again is impossible, then we should take as our ideal abandonment of the fruit of works. As Śaṅkara says, 'Abandonment of the fruit of all action is taught as a means to bliss in the case of an ignorant person engaged in action, and only when unable to tread the paths taught before, but not at first.'[3] Śaṅkara would support his contention also by reference to vii. 17: 'Of these, most excellent is the man of knowledge.'

Yet though there are in the *Gītā* isolated passages teaching the superiority of knowledge over action, we cannot say that these passages are typical. If they were, we should have to bring against the *Gītā*

[1] Cf. Śāstrī's translation of Śaṅkara's *Commentary*, p. 19.
[2] Op. cit., p. 22; cf. also *Gītā*, vii. 17.
[3] Op. cit., p. 270.

the same charges of excessive intellectualism as have been laid against the Upanishads and the Sāṅkhya generally. We should have to point out, e.g., that Śaṅkara has restricted the path of knowledge to Sannyāsins only, and therefore has committed himself to the depressing doctrine that the highest kind of salvation is possible only for the few. We should also have to point out that, in the beginning of his commentary on the twelfth book, Śaṅkara seems almost to admit that the Unmanifest, who is reached by knowledge only, is too abstract to be a proper object of worship.

It is, however, possible to argue that the *Gītā* not only refuses to put the path of works lower than the path of knowledge, but even urges the superior excellence of the former. Though Śaṅkara may be successful in citing passages in support of a pure Sāṅkhyan doctrine, he is by no means successful in explaining away the passages in which the Yoga doctrine of the superiority of works is stated, and it is these latter passages which really give the prevailing tone to the book as a whole. The typical reference on this point is in the beginning of Book III. Here the argument is that work is the natural condition of humanity—even if we wish it, we cannot avoid working. Therefore it is better to submit to this rule and to work in the proper spirit of detachment than to do no work at all. 'Without undertaking works no man may possess worklessness, nor can he come to adeptship by the mere casting off of works. For no man ever, even for a moment, abides workless. Every one is perforce made to do work by the Moods born of nature.' 'Do thine ordained work, for work is more excellent than no work. . . . Even the subsistence of the body cannot be won from no work' (iii. 4, 5, 8). Cf. also v. 2: 'The

rule of works is higher than the casting off of works' ; and again, xviii. 7 : 'To cast off a binding work is not fitting : surrender thereof by reason of bewilderment is declared to be of the Gloom-mood.'

These verses are in clear contrast to quietism, and altogether mark a healthy advance. There is a suggestion that quietism is somewhat abnormal, and that the man who undertakes no work is out of harmony with nature, is setting himself against the law of the universe, and is therefore doomed to failure. The suspicion that in the adoption of this method he is defeating his own end is more clearly brought out in iii. 6, where it is pointed out that, though a man may cease from external work, he does not thus put an end to mental activity or to the distraction of attention by the objects of sense. 'He who sits with his sense-instruments of action restrained, but with his mind dwelling on the objects of the sense-instruments, is said to be a deluded soul, a walker in vain ways.' The way of works is, further, more generally effective. It is open to all, and can set all men at least *on the way* towards knowledge.

Our author would, however, agree with the upholders of the knowledge rule to the extent of allowing that surrender is necessary ; but he would point out to them that this is the surrender, not of works, but of the fruit of works. We are to work without concerning ourselves with the result of our labours. The binding works are to be 'done as a duty, with surrender of attachment and fruit' (xviii. 9). We are to surrender ourselves to the inevitable processes of nature, remembering that we are made to do works by the Moods of nature (iii. 5). We must imitate the detachment of the Author of nature, who so abandons personal interest that work might, from one point of view, be said to be done altogether

by these Moods (cf. xiii. 29). Even if we give full value to other passages in the *Gītā* in which God is represented as sustaining the universe by his activity, we might still say that the subjective or psychological detachment is complete. Though God must work to save the worlds from perishing (iii. 24) yet in his work he has no desire and no need. Even though he works, his work is entirely selfless. In the processes of nature he is simply providing a means of exercise by availing themselves of which human beings may work out their own salvation.

It is this selflessness which the individual worshipper has to imitate. If the world cannot be conceived of as working out any adequate purpose of God, still less can it be expected to work out human purposes. It is at best a moral and religious gymnasium; it is without meaning in itself. As Barnett puts it, it is merely 'an ante-chamber to eternity.'[1] We must indeed place ourselves within the world-process, inasmuch as pure passivity is impossible; but all work that we do must be void of attachment. If the whole meaning of any works is constituted by their fulfilment of selfish purposes, as in ambitious actions or ritual actions designed merely to benefit the worshipper, such actions should be abandoned—unless they can be transformed into selfless deeds. Other works may be described as fitting: they are prescribed for us by our particular environment. We must simply take them as they come to us, regarding them as the duties of our station. We must not seek to alter these duties or to transform them in the light of a higher ideal than the immediate environment may suggest. . . . The principle which underlies the institution of caste may give us sufficient guidance, and, should there be any want of adjustment between our caste posi-

[1] Introduction to *Gītā*, p. 68.

tion and our subjective capacities, harmony must be attained by adapting ourselves to the environment, and not by attempting to adjust the environment to ourselves. Such conservative teaching we get in iii. 35 : 'There is more happiness in doing one's own Law without excellence than in doing another's Law well. It is happier to die in one's own Law ; another's Law brings dread.'

The duties of our station must, then, be accepted without question, and in the doing of them we must have no thought of 'mine' or 'I' (xii. 13). Our every motion must be 'void of love and purpose.' 'In works be thine office : in their fruits must it never be' (ii. 47). Our actions within the prescribed limits must be moderate, as befits those whose minds are undisturbed by passion and affection (vi. 16 ; ii. 55, 57). 'Nothing in excess' might be our motto ; we must not 'trouble the world, neither be troubled by it' (xii. 15). We might sum up the teaching by saying that we must come subjectively as near to not doing the works as is consistent with the retention of sufficient will power to bring about their objective performance. Only by this detachment can we separate ourselves from the consequences of works, can we realize that the chain of causes and effects has in reality no meaning, that it represents no progress, but is merely a cyclic process, in which things will be in the end as they were at the beginning, and repetitions will become monotonous because of their endlessness.

It must be observed that, even in connection with the doctrine of self-sacrificing works, we have not got away from the influence of the Sāṅkhya philosophy with its emphasis upon dominance of the natural process. The exhortation to fitting works has hardly an ethical quality, if these works are in

any case forced upon us by nature. In such case there is no possibility of human freedom, and, if the natural process to which we are to conform has no meaning in itself, there is no possibility of progress. The appeals for selfless labour have indeed a certain amount of grandeur, but they fall far short of the inspirational value which they might have had if the selflessness enjoined had been a true antidote to selfishness. This it could only have been if it had been brought into connection with some great world-purpose in the pursuance of which we might forget our own narrow selves. As it is, however, we have here merely a refined form of selfishness, seeing that our efforts are directed mainly towards getting rid of our own misery. We are told that we may do this by realizing that our actions simply have no consequences worth caring about. But, here again, we may ask the question whether the acceptance of a meaningless inevitable will give sufficient stimulus even for the actions which we are enjoined to do in order to bring about the end of detachment. Does it not seem as if there were an irreducible discrepancy between the end and the means provided? We are to work, but for what?—simply in order that we may realize that the works are useless so far as the fulfilment of anything else than a merely subjective result is concerned. Shall we not, in such a situation, be tempted to take a short cut to quietism?

But there is another aspect of this matter which must be considered. The abandonment of the fruit of works is often represented as sacrifice, and in this we have a conception of great ethical and religious value. In connection with this, may not the doing of these works in a selfless mood be far removed from even the most refined selfishness—may it not be the highest form of religious conse-

cration? May it not imply the reaching out towards a higher Self, in love of whom the poor and low desires of the individual self may find their full satisfaction and thus die? Is not our acquiescence in the world-process, our passive performance of the duties of our station, just a surrender of ourselves to the will of God? Have we not here the highest attitude which it is possible for the human soul to reach, an attitude in which all our little desires are swept into the strong current of the love of God?

There are many passages in the *Gītā* which would seem to favour such an interpretation, and, in so far as these passages dominate its spirit, it is relieved of the charge of negation. Whenever the author shakes himself free from the benumbing influence of his philosophical inheritance he places the whole movement of the soul upon a higher level. Love to God is to be the force which moves to all sacrifice, and such sacrifice will bring us into personal communion with Him. 'He who does my work, who is given over to me, void of attachment, without hatred to any born being, son of Paṇḍu, comes to me' (xi. 55). The warm personal note of the concluding stanzas of the poem has already been referred to. We may compare also xviii. 65: 'Have thy mind on me, thy devotion towards me, thy sacrifice towards me, do homage to me, to me shalt thou come'; and 68 and 69: 'He who in supreme devotion toward me shall recite this supreme secret amongst my worshippers shall assuredly come to me. None of men shall to me be more acceptable of works than he; none shall be dearer to me on earth than he.' We may also recall the ideals of the compassion and forgiving love of God which we have discussed above.

But, at the same time, this belief in and devotion

to a personal God, which would have redeemed its whole teaching, does not get full play in the *Gītā*, and the reason of this restriction brings us, finally, to a consideration of the influence exerted by the abstract identity philosophy of the Upanishads. If this influence had been absent, or if it had been less strong, the theism of the *Gītā* would have been much more pronounced and much more effective in the ethical transformation of life.

Many traces of direct borrowing from the Upanishads may be found. Prof. Garbe gives a long list of such passages in his *Introduction* to the *Gītā* (69). This list need not be repeated here. It is sufficient to say that the list contains some of the most characteristic passages in the *Gītā*, some of which have already been quoted. Many striking metaphors also are transferred from the Upanishads to the *Gītā*. The illustration of the fig-tree, e.g., which occurs in Chapter XV., is borrowed from the *Kaṭha Upanishad*, ii. 6. 1. In general, it may be said that the influence of the Vedāntic conception of the relation between God and man is very far-reaching, and it reinforces the influences which we have already found to be derived from the Sāṅkhya philosophy. And, once more, the identity philosophy of idealistic Pantheism is found to counteract a healthy theistic influence, and to lead to fatalism, inaction, and pessimism.

In support of this contention we may notice, first of all, that the abstract procedure evacuates the idea of devotion of all properly religious and ethical meaning. We are to renounce all thought of the individual self in order that we may reach the eternal Self. But, just as in the Upanishads, so here the pantheistic identity between God and the world works out to a destruction of all the interest of the world and of finite individuals. Identity

between the divine Self and the human self is reached by reducing both to the lowest possible content. We are to see 'all things indifferently in the likeness of the Self' (vi. 32). The world loses its meaning in the eternal. Behind the Personal God there is the Indefinable and the Unknown, and attainment of identity with the abstract Being is the highest goal (xii. 1-4).

But what is the effect of this upon our practical view of life? Does it not show more clearly than ever the futility of the rule of works which much of the *Gītā* is devoted to inculcating? Performance of works was to secure our deliverance; but the deliverance is merely deliverance *from*, and does not bring us to any positive religious result. Seeing that the ultimate Reality is characterless, the world-process is meaningless, and all our action in reference to it is meaningless also. As far as permanent importance is concerned, the world-process is little better than a dream. Why, then, should we work in reference to it, any more than we should, in waking life, labour to set right the confusions and perplexities of a dream? We could have gloried in the idea of sacrifice if it had been sacrifice to something or to Someone; but sacrifice to an abstraction fills us with a sense of despair—it seems to be waste, without any adequate reason for the waste. We are willing to lose our lower life in order to find a higher life, but when the higher turns out to be emptiness, the ideal becomes ineffective practically, however much theoretical admiration may be bestowed upon it.

Of course we shall be told that, in urging a consideration of this kind, we are relapsing to the lower level characterized by desire for the 'fruit of works.' Such an accusation would be entirely unjust if it fastened upon us an opinion that the

ideal may legitimately be a selfish one, and those who make the accusation are but too much inclined to lay a charge of this sort. We hold most firmly to the position that the ideal must not be selfish, but we hold with equal conviction that it cannot be selfless, either as regards the individual or the environment. The highest religious ideal cannot be expressed as a relation of identity in which the two terms—the worshipper and the worshipped—lose all character. It must be a relation of communion—not for the purpose of fulfilling selfish aims and desires, but for the preservation of the worthy part of our lives, giving it a place in a universe full of permanent character, connecting it with God, but not merging it in God. We demand that this ideal of personal communion—which is admittedly the ideal of certain portions of the *Gītā*—should receive metaphysical justification, if the efforts which the *Gītā* urges us to make in order to reach the divine are not entirely to lose their meaning. The absorption of the individual in God—which is the ideal of those portions of the *Gītā* which are most under the influence of the Upanishads—does not warrant us in taking any trouble to reach the ideal. And the motives are still further weakened if the God whom we are to reach is without qualities. It is impossible to stimulate men to action if their actions are to have no permanent results—if they cannot enter into and become part of the permanent purposes of God. A system of drill merely for the sake of drill soon loses all interest, and, if it is to be voluntarily continued, it must be shown to have reference to physical well-being or national defence. Similarly with the actions which we call duties or describe by the adjective 'moral.' They must be shown to have a place in a permanent scheme of things and

to have relation to a God who is also moral. The influence of the high-toned, unselfish morality of many portions of the *Gītā* is greatly diminished when attention is turned to the portions influenced by the Upanishad ideal. Moral action can have value only in relation to a moral God, and, if we find that God is non-moral, there is a danger that the obligations of morality will be weakened. We shall either fail to perform the duties or shall perform them in a lifeless, mechanical way, as mere exercises of the soul and nothing more. If the ideal is that we shall 'renounce all undertakings' (xiv. 25), we shall be apt to fulfil this condition before we reach the goal. If goodness, though it be the highest of the moods, clear in its illuminating power and upward in its tendency, has yet to be passed beyond (xiv. 6, 18, 20), if 'the Supreme takes unto himself no sin of any man and likewise no good deed' (v. 15), we feel that our struggles for righteousness end in futility, and a sense of deceptiveness in all judgments of worth will take possession of us. We have tried to reconcile the world with God by denying the reality of the elements that obviously differ from Him—the suffering and the pain and the evil; but, if we have also to deny the reality of what we had thought to be obviously divine, we are left helpless and forlorn in the midst of falling worlds. If good and evil are alike negated, why should we do the good rather than the evil? Our human nature may be theoretically, but certainly cannot be practically, satisfied by such an ideal as is described for us in xiii. 10. We revolt against the demand that we should be 'indifferent to honour and dishonour, indifferent to the interests of friend or foe.' This 'everlasting indifference of mind' (xiii. 9) seems everlasting emptiness. Alone we seek the Alone, but even if a soul could succeed in

its solitary search, it would find itself in a desert. It has lost the human companionship, and it has not gained the divine.

And as we realize the appalling emptiness of the ideal, and in our disappointment retrace our steps to the world of men and things, we remember that, in the course of our search, we have already definitely refused to find God in this world of ordinary experience. Yet we *have* to return to the world, and it will now be for us a world without God, a meaningless world, a world of constant process but no progress, from which the light has gone out and purpose has been excluded, but nevertheless a world of oppression and relentless might from which we cannot set ourselves free.

Thus, in the *Gītā* we have found certain doctrines which go a considerable distance in the direction of moral indifference, determinism, and ultimate pessimism, and do much to counteract the influence of the healthy ethical tendency, the assertion of moral freedom, and the elevated religious ideal which we find in much of the rest of its teaching. We feel that the *Gītā* has not fully reckoned with the dualism which is either the inevitable consequence of Pantheism or is made more acute by Pantheism. Neither has it fully reckoned with Pantheism itself. It has admitted a secret enemy into its own household of faith, and allowed its highest religious influence to be impaired. Success will not be attained by simply putting the theistic ideal alongside of the ideal of abstract Pantheism. The fundamental error of the latter must be laid bare. It must be shown that we cannot acquiesce in a facile identification of God with the world, or in a—perhaps less facile—merging of the world in God, if we are to have any secure foundation for morality, progress, and religion. For the idea of

deliverance we must substitute the ideal of salvation, and salvation not only for the individual but for the world. In the *Gītā* there is much to give us hope, but also much to cause us to despair, and amongst the causes of despair the chief place is occupied by the pantheistic inheritance we have been considering.

SUPPLEMENT TO CHAPTER XII

PANTHEISM IN THE INSTITUTES OF MANU

We may supplement this chapter by a short reference to a work now usually taken to be contemporaneous with the *Gītā*, viz. *The Code of Manu*—one of the most celebrated books in ancient Indian literature, and one which exerts even down to the present day a most powerful influence both on custom and on law. Monier Williams dated this book about 500 B.C., but most modern scholars assign it, on the ground of both its language and its contents, to the period between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200, and indeed show a distinct preference for the latter date. They thus regard it as contemporaneous with the *Gītā*. At the same time it is recognized that, in the form in which we now have it, the book is the final product of a series of recensions extending over many centuries. Further, it cannot be assigned to any one author. It is a compilation from many sources, and even the name of the final compiler is unknown. The authors to whom credit is given in the text are entirely mythical, and are introduced for the purpose of bestowing an air of fictitious authority and antiquity.

The book, as we have it, is for the most part a code of law; its laws are mainly concerned with Brāhmans, and intensely favourable to them. Minute regulations are laid down for the four stages of the Brāhmanic life. Considerable space is, however, devoted to rules of kingly government and to domestic matters, especially to the position of women and the relations of husband and wife. The generally legal character of the book might seem to

set it entirely outside the limits of our study, but there are several reasons why we should briefly refer to it. The first of these reasons is its great importance and influence at the present day. The second is the generally close connection which exists between law and religion in Indian thought. The third is that it has been suggested that this very code of laws was an attempt to deal with the situation created by the spread of the teaching of Buddha. Finally, there are traces to be found in it of a fairly definite religious philosophy.

It is with the character of this philosophy that we are immediately concerned, and it is interesting to notice the type of thought to the preservation and enshrinement of which the famous law-book has lent itself. It is, of course, impossible to trace in this book any very clear indication of the effect of the particular philosophy upon practical life, as, though we have in it both philosophy and practical regulations, very little attempt is made to relate the one to the other. Still, the influence of the philosophy may be discovered in the general attitude adopted throughout the book, and, even though we may not, within the book, be able to trace the connection between particular philosophical statements and particular laws, the mere preservation of the philosophy in a code affecting the community is evidence of the importance which the community assigned to this particular way of thinking.

The philosophy which stands in the background at least of the book is mainly pantheistic Vedāntism in its more naturalistic and realistic form. The Sāṅkhya system is by some, however, taken to be more fundamental, and this contention is not without good reason. In xii. 23 ff. we have explicit reference to the three *guṇas* of this system. They are the three threads which enter into each individuality, 'penetrating and underlying all existing things' (26). The original material of the world is constituted by their union and equipoise, and, according to the permanence of any one of the qualities in any given individual, so is the character of that individual. Passion—love and hate—whatever is 'united with grief,' or is connected with selfish desire and ambition (28 and 32)—is normal to human beings, just as the domination of the mood of darkness

is normal to animals *and Śūdras*. The ideal, however, is constituted by the mood of essentiality or knowledge, and to allow this mood to rule is the highest good.

The method of reaching the good is mainly negative. It is by way of asceticism, ceremonial cleansing, and restraint of the senses (xii. 31), with performance of the rules of right without any active enthusiasm, i.e. in a manner clearly distinguished from the 'desire for undertaking' or the 'seeking for extended fame,' which are characteristic of the passion mood. Subjectively, one who is aspiring after the divinity of the *sattva* mood takes up a universal attitude to every action—'he is not ashamed of performing it or of having it known to every one.' Further, he feels that his self is pleased, and he has the sense of having accomplished another stage of the greatest activity of all, viz. meditation upon the self. The similarity between this highest state and the ideal of the Vedānta should be constantly kept in mind.

Sāṅkhya influence may also be traced in the cosmogony of the laws. The original Being shows considerable resemblance to the Sāṅkhya *prakṛiti*. He is unmanifest, indiscernible (i. 5. 6). In the evolution of material things he first creates water and in this places the 'golden germ.' In course of time this divides into two, and forms the heaven and the earth. Mind also is produced, and the principle of self-consciousness; then the organs of sense, then the subtile elements, and then the gross elements—all the details of the Sāṅkhya system are faithfully followed.

At the same time the divine and more active aspect of nature is emphasized rather in accordance with the teaching of the more realistic passages in the Upanishads. The study of the Upanishads themselves is repeatedly recommended. Cf. vi. 29: 'For the perfection of his self, he must study also the different Upanishad parts of the Vedas,' and in verse 83 of the same book attention is also drawn to Vedāntic literature in specially close connection with the doctrine of the Supreme Self. References to the esoteric teaching of the Vedas or the Upanishads may also be found in ii. 140 and 165. This constant appeal to Vedāntic sources would seem to indicate that the compiler was in fairly close agreement with the teaching of that philo-

sophy. In the passages from the first book descriptive of the process of evolution, the power of causing the evolution is attributed to a supreme self-existent Lord, who thrust out from himself the various beings of the world of experience, much after the manner of the cosmogonies of the Upanishads (i. 6).

Again, there is evidence of Vedāntic influence in the idealistic tendency of many passages. The ultimate Being is subtile in character and in a general sense incomprehensible. He is to be approached only through the efficacy of power beyond the senses under the operation of the mood of knowledge. The highest wisdom is self-contemplation, undertaken with the purpose of discovering the identity between the self of the individual and the Universal Self. In regard to the world as a whole there is, however, no acceptance of the extreme idealistic position of the Vedānta which would regard the world as an illusion. Brahman is not regarded as the sole existence. Rather does he pantheistically pervade all created things (xii. 123, 125) in the form of fire or breath or subtile ethereal essence. The world-process is one of emanation. It is, however, also a process of reabsorption. The eternal spirit keeps going the wheel of transmigration, and after this *wheel* has revolved all things will be as they were in the beginning.

For the individual also the highest aim seems to be absorption. He attains equality with the All and enters into the world-substance, the neuter Brahman (xii. 125). There are, indeed, promises of a heaven of bliss, but these seem hardly to refer to the highest stage of all, which, if it is not materialistic absorption, is merely identity with an abstract Being. We enter once more on a process of negation. By ritualistic ascetic practices, by meditation, the worshipper will see the course of the 'internal Self through high and low beings' (vi. 73). By 'harmlessness,' 'non-attachment,' 'indifference to all emotions,' he will attain the highest end. 'Having in this way gradually relinquished all attachments, freed from all duality, he is firm in Brahman alone. All this depends on meditation on whatsoever has been declared' (vi. 81, 82).

We do not pretend that this book of laws is of first importance for our present study. The metaphysical part

is, after all, not the main part of the book. But there are, nevertheless, distinct traces of a pantheistic philosophy, and this philosophy does seem to have a certain influence akin to that which we have already attributed to the Pantheism of the Vedānta. The ethical interest is here, perhaps, on the whole stronger than in the Vedānta, and in certain passages (e.g. xii. 37) the universality and elevation of the moral law is fully recognized. But at the same time there are signs of influence of a somewhat depressing character. The highest ideal is exclusively intellectual, and is the product of meditation and the renunciation of action. We meet once again with the esoteric tendency of intellectualism. The knowledge which has been won is not to be communicated. 'A teacher of the Veda should die with his knowledge.' And nowhere, perhaps, is the exclusiveness of the Brāhman class, which alone possesses this knowledge, more ruthlessly emphasized. The Śūdras and the abhorred barbarians are far separated from the Brāhmans, and classed amongst 'elephants, lions, tigers, and boars' (x. 43).

Again, the very minuteness and rigour of the regulations seems to imply a consciousness of a fixed and mechanical character of life such as would be altogether inimical to progress. There is nothing of the inspiration which comes from freedom. Mr. R. C. Dutt says, in his chapter on the *Laws of Manu*: 'Genius was impossible except amongst priests and kings. Men held in a perpetual bondage and servitude never learnt to aspire after greatness and glory. Men to whom honour was impossible never learnt to deserve honour and distinction. In other countries a Cincinnatus might leave his plough and wield the destinies of his nation; a Robert Burns might give expression to a nation's sentiment in thoughts that breathe and words that burn; but in India the cultivator's fate was sealed, he could never break through the adamant wall of social rules.'[1] This picture of unchangeableness in conditions is not surprising when we relate it to current philosophical thoughts. Why indeed should there be any attempt at progress? The whole process is cyclic. Whatever may be done will in the end

[1] *Ancient India*, p. 560.

make no difference, for everything that has been will return in the ceaseless revolving of the wheel. The whole process is meaningless. Ultimately we have to renounce action and seek identity with a being from whom every quality has been withdrawn. There is no inducement to make distinctions between right and wrong if the ultimate is characterless. There is no incitement to progress if progress is to be in the end without meaning and all action is part of a process from which our highest endeavour ought to be to escape. We do not pretend that the religious philosophy underlying the *Laws of Manu* is entirely pantheistic, but to a great extent it merits this description, and some of the usual accompaniments and consequences of Pantheism are unmistakably present.

CHAPTER XIV

PANTHEISM IN THE PURĀṆAS—THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PANTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

The influence of pantheistic ideas after the period of the *Gītā* and the *Laws of Manu* must be studied in close connection with polytheistic development. We have to turn our attention away from philosophy to popular religion, and we find ourselves in the presence of the beginnings of modern Hinduism. During the second four hundred years of the Christian era there was no philosophy or philosophical religion of outstanding importance to put over against the traditional polytheism. Buddhism had lost its force, and Brahmanism was only beginning to regain something of its former importance. Its power was closely connected with a more or less genuinely receptive attitude towards the gods of the popular polytheism of the period. At the same time this polytheism could not be treated in entire separation from the traditional philosophy or from the reconstruction of it at the hands of Kumārila and Śaṅkara, the results of whose labours were making themselves apparent in general thought. Consequently, in any attempt at religious expression we shall expect to find a combination of Pantheism and polytheism. This combination would be no new thing. It was evident in the universalizing of the nature-gods of the Vedas, and the co-existence and interconnection of philosophical and popular

beliefs may be traced right down through the literature. Such a synthesis again appears in the *Purāṇas*. We should notice, in passing, that the synthetic relation between Pantheism and polytheism may be due not merely to historical causes but to an intrinsic connection. This last point we shall attempt to develop in the second part of this chapter.

The Purāṇas are sometimes described as a 'fifth Veda,' but they are not very serious treatises either religiously or philosophically. They are eighteen in number, and are usually assigned to the period between the sixth and the sixteenth centuries. They are a mixture of crude mythological cosmogonies, legends of gods and heroes, ritual and social regulations. They are usually devoted to the cult of one particular deity of the Hindu pantheon, and speak in no moderate terms in condemnation of those who fail to accord due worship to this special object of worship. There seems to have been a regular tradition as to the arrangement of the material to be dealt with. Each Purāṇa was supposed to be divided into five parts (1) cosmogony, or the primary creation of the universe; (2) secondary creation, or the destruction and renovation of worlds; (3) genealogy of gods and heroes; (4) reigns of the Manus, or periods known as the Manwantaras; (5) histories of the races of kings. Very few of the Purāṇas, however, correspond exactly to this description. The best known of the Purāṇas, and the most influential at the present day, are the *Bhāgavata* and *Vishṇu* Purāṇas. These probably owe their modern popularity to a portion which they have practically in common, viz. an account of the youthful days of Kṛishṇa, forming the tenth book of the former Purāṇa and the fifth book of the latter. The account in the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* is

slightly more abridged than in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

We may select the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* for slightly more detailed examination. It is divided into six books, of which the first gives an account of the creation of the universe, which account is mainly drawn from Sāṅkhya sources. The second gives a description of the earth, especially of the region of Bhāratavarsha, of the seven regions of Pātāla, under the earth, of the different hells, the sun, the moon, and the planets, concluding with the legend of Bhārata. One of the most important parts of this book is the fourteenth chapter, in which Bhārata expounds the nature of existence and the means of identification with the Supreme Spirit. Of the third book the first two chapters treat of the Manus and the Manwantaras, the doctrine of the four ages being introduced at the end of the second chapter. This gives opportunity for a description of the functions of Vishṇu during the four ages. In the *Kṛita* age he is the imparter of wisdom; in the *Tretā* age he is the universal monarch; in the *Dwāpara* age he promulgates the four Vedas; and at the end of the *Kali* age he is expected to appear as Kalki, for the purpose of bringing back the wicked to the paths of righteousness. The next four chapters are occupied with legends about the promulgation of the Vedas, and the next ten mainly with minute regulations as to the duties of the four castes, the duties peculiar to the four conventional periods of life, together with particulars of birth, marriage, and funeral ritual. The last two chapters are polemical. The seventeenth gives an account of the strife between the gods and the demons. The gods are delivered by means of prayer addressed to Vishṇu, who provides them with an 'illusory form' by which the Daityas or demons are to be

deceived. In the concluding chapter the 'illusory form' turns out to be Buddha, who, teaching sceptical and contradictory doctrines, spreads heresies amongst the demons and converts them to the Jain and Buddhist faiths. The demons are thus induced to lay aside the armour of religion and become an easy prey to the assaults of the gods.

Book IV contains accounts of the solar and lunar dynasties, and Book V, as already said, is mainly devoted to the story of Kṛishṇa. In the sixth and last Book there is a renewed consideration of the theory of the four ages. The disabilities of the Kali age are dwelt upon, but at the same time it is allowed to have certain redeeming features, and the authors point out that, whatever our external lot may be, devotion to Vishṇu is sufficient for salvation. Salvation, however, is of a negative character, for, whether in infancy, manhood or old age, the world of our experience is full of suffering, and even the happiness of heaven is imperfect. So we must rise through the various stages of Yoga, or contemplative devotion, meditating on the individual and universal forms of Vishṇu, until we reach the perfect knowledge and the final liberation which it brings.

The *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, as its name implies, and as its contents show, is devoted to the praise of Vishṇu. By this time Vishṇu had become the most important member of the Hindu trinity, the members of which are usually given as Vishṇu, Śiva, and Brahman. The last is by no means of equal importance with the other two. He is usually regarded as merely an emanation of Śiva or Vishṇu, and in later times worship of him gives place to the worship of the female manifestations of the essence of Śiva. Even Śiva, however, had to waive his claims in favour of Vishṇu and his many incarnations, such as Rāma,

Kṛishṇa, &c. The *Purāṇa* represents an extreme sectarian attitude. Vishṇu is identified with the *All*, and the followers of the other gods are regarded as heretics, unless indeed they are willing to regard the gods worshipped by them as wholly subordinate allies of Vishṇu, dependent on him for their existence and protection.

What chiefly interests us, however, is the method and stages of the Vishṇu glorification. This seems to be brought about by the application of pantheistic ideas. Such a pantheistic tendency is certainly not confined to the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, but is a characteristic of this whole class of literature. . . . Long ago Dr. H. H. Wilson could write: 'The doctrine of Pantheism—the identification of God and the universe—is another principle which the Purāṇas most unequivocally and resolutely maintain. Vishṇu or Śiva, or Śakti, whatever individual they undertake to glorify, is not only the remote and efficient, but the proximate and substantial cause of the world. . . . It cannot be questioned that the writings confound the creation with the creator, and expose themselves to the imputation of gross materialism.'[1] In his introduction to the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* Wilson also speaks of the Pantheism as 'invariable, though the particular deity who is all things, from whom all things proceed, and to whom all things return, be diversified according to their individual sectarian bias.'[2] More modern writers echo this early judgment of Wilson's. Mr. Romesh Chunder Dutt, e.g., emphasizes the negative aspect of the Purāṇic Pantheism.[3]

It has sometimes been pointed out that it is to the infusion of this pantheistic tendency that we may attribute the chief distinction between Vedic

[1] *Religion of the Hindus*, p. 95. [2] Cf. *Ancient India*, p. 561.
[3] Introduction, p. xiii.

and Purāṇic deities. The Purāṇic deities are the lineal descendants of certain members of the Vedic pantheon, Śiva being identifiable with the Rudra of the Vedas, and Vishṇu occupying a minor position in the Vedas under his own name. There are also many general similarities between the Vedic and the Purāṇic deities; but the elemental character of the Vedic gods is more strongly marked, and though the Purāṇas indicate a return to the worship of these or similar gods, it is a return under the influence of more absorbent pantheistic ideas. In the Purāṇas the individual gods are of minor importance. Above them there is the Supreme Being, and, if at times this Supreme Being appears in a triple manifestation, the triunity soon disappears and either Vishṇu or Śiva is identified with the All. Vishṇu seems to have been peculiarly susceptible to pantheistic treatment, especially of a negative character. He has indeed been described as 'the sectarian aspect of the Vedānta system.' [1] On this account the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* may, with special appropriateness, be studied for the purpose of tracing the influence of Vedāntic Pantheism in the Purāṇic age.

We have already alluded generally to the pantheistic colouring of the method by which Vishṇu is elevated to supreme rank, but a little more detail may be useful. The cosmogony of the opening sections is mainly derived from the Sāṇkhya philosophy, but with avoidance of the dualism of that philosophy. Vishṇu is the source of all. Compounded of the 'three qualities,' he is the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction, the parent of nature, intellect, and other ingredients of the universe (cf. i. 1). The *Parāsāra* address in the beginning of the second chapter is more uncompromising in its Pantheism. The world not only

[1] Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 485.

emanates from Vishṇu, but is identified with him : Vishṇu is the one universal nature. He is the root of the world, and in him consists the world. After the manner of the Vedānta, he is represented as composed of contradictory qualities. He is both 'subtile and corporeal,' 'indiscrete and discrete,' 'the support of all things and the smallest of the small.' But, throughout, there is unity of essence ; 'in him is the whole world interwoven and from him and in him is the universe. . . . All things are but portions of the universal Vishṇu' (i. 22). The process popularly known as creation is a process only of emanation and gradual growth. 'The divine Hari is the cause of all things by successive developments. As all the parts of the future plant, existing in the seed of rice, spontaneously evolve, when they are in approximation with the subsidiary means of growth, so gods, men, and other things, involved in many actions, become manifested in their full growth through the influence of the energy of Vishṇu' (i. 17). The commendable crime of Prahlāda, whose story is given in i. 17, is that he has learnt to adore Vishṇu in a pantheistic manner as the universal cause of causes, who 'pervades all the regions of the universe and by his omnipresence influences the conduct of all beings, mine, father, and thine.' Again, the summation of the teaching of the second book is said to be that 'this whole universe is the one undivided nature of the supreme spirit, entitled Vāsudeva' (ii. 15).

The passages already quoted are evidences of what has been called the more naturalistic phase of Pantheism, with its accompanying determinism. But there are unmistakable evidences also of the influence of the more abstract phase, with its allied doctrines of illusion and the worthlessness of all finite things. The problem of the one and the

many was evidently not absent from the minds of the authors of the Purāṇas, and, in their efforts to reconcile contradictions, they lay the stronger emphasis upon the aspects of unity, simplicity, and unchangeableness. This is noticeable already in the second chapter of the first book; Vishṇu is the 'unchanged, imperishable, eternal and incorrupt, one with true wisdom, who is *known through false appearances* by the nature of visible things. He is without qualities, and is exempt from birth, vicissitude, death, and decay. He is always alone' (i. 2). He alone is real, and in contradistinction to him 'mountains, oceans, and all the diversities of earth and the rest are the illusions of the apprehension. When knowledge is pure, real, universal, independent of works and exempt from defect, then the varieties of substance which are the fruit of the tree of desire cease to exist in matter.' The boy Prahlāda is represented as having a true inkling of the abstract character of Vishṇu, who 'is without beginning, middle, or end, increase or diminution' (i. 17).

Vishṇu absorbs all other existences, even those of the gods, the ṛishis, and the sovereigns of the gods. Cf. iii. 1: 'All the gods, the Manus, the seven ṛishis, the sons of the Manus, the Indras, the sovereigns of the gods, all are but the impersonated might of Vishṇu'; even in regard to the heroes, who might be supposed to be nearer to human experience, we ask the question whether they ever existed, and we receive no positive answer (cf. iv. 24).

Seeing, then, that Vishṇu is the one and only reality, the aim of the worshipper will be identification with him. His practical attitude will be one of detachment. Only a fourth of man's life, and that the least valuable part, is to be given to ordinary duties and ordinary interests. Why should a man

not take up this attitude of detachment? There is nothing but sorrow in all created things, and even heaven itself is not unclouded bliss (cf. vi. 5). Detachment, therefore, is the only right attitude. Through the moral qualities of purity of heart, contentment, charity, holiness, we shall strive to realize Vāsudeva in our heart. But he is essentially knowledge, and therefore can be reached only through knowledge which has transcended all differences. Four stages of knowledge may be distinguished, but the first three stages are marred by the retention of a certain consciousness of duality. It is only at the fourth stage that we are able to contemplate the true essence of the soul and reach the supreme condition of Vishṇu himself, 'who is one with wisdom, is the knowledge of the truth, which is not to be taught, which is internally diffused, the object of which is self-illumination, which is simply existent and is not to be defined, which is tranquil, fearless and pure, which is not the theme of reasoning and which stands in need of no support' (i. 22). It is the condition which the youth Prahlāda has attained, according to the description in the following beautiful passage: 'Thus, meditating upon Vishṇu, as identical with his own spirit, Prahlāda became as one with him, and finally regarded himself as the divinity. He forgot entirely his own individuality, and was conscious of nothing else than his being the inexhaustible, eternal, supreme soul; and in consequence of the efficacy of this conviction of identity, the imperishable Vishṇu, whose essence is wisdom, became present in his heart, which was wholly purified from sin' (i. 20). It is the goal towards which all men are said to strive, for 'best of all is identification with the supreme spirit' (ii. 14).

We have thus extracted from this Purāṇa a pure

Vedāntic philosophy, and have discovered that it constitutes a large part of the means by which the elevation of Vishṇu has been accomplished. The identification of the worshipper with him has been indicated as the desirable goal of religious searching. To a certain extent this Vedāntic tendency brings about a purification of polytheism, but it is a purification at the expense of the sacrifice of ordinary reality. It is also a purification which depends too much on the intellect, which is associated with a pessimistic attitude to life, with quietism and determinism and conservatism, with escape from the difficulties of life rather than solution of them. But we have already pointed out these accompaniments and consequences of Vedāntic Pantheism wherever it appears, and it is sufficient if we simply draw attention to them here. It is important that we should notice the persistence of Pantheism in the Purāṇic type of popular literature and realize that here, as always, its purification of polytheism is bought with a price.

We may now consider the connection of Pantheism with polytheism in a more general way, and ask whether the influence of the former upon the latter may not in India have been of the nature of encouragement rather than of purification. It is obvious that, in dealing with such a subject, we shall be dealing with a process which represents a revolt from the exclusive intellectualism of Pantheism. At the same time the process is greatly strengthened by association with other aspects of Pantheism.

The chronological sequence of Pantheism and polytheism is not of very great importance for our subject. Sometimes the pantheistic aspect of the religion was prominent and sometimes the polytheistic; never did the one wholly give place to

the other. We may thus represent polytheism as a reaction from Pantheism and to a certain extent a degradation, or we may regard Pantheism as a reformation and purification of polytheism. It is the co-existence of the two, or the perpetual swing of the pendulum from the one to the other, which is of importance for our subject. This very fact of facile interchange is a phenomenon in the history of thought which is worthy of attention.

With the help of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa* we have been tracing the universalizing pantheistic process in connection with Vishṇu. We may now turn our thought in the other direction and try to realize the logical, if not temporal, transition from Pantheism to polytheism—from the conception of God as the All to the worship of gods many.

We may here point out certain characteristics of the polytheism which existed and still exists alongside of the elevated religious and pantheistic tendency to be found in the Vedānta and, to a much lesser extent, in some portions of the Purāṇas. We have already alluded to the Trimūrti—the Hindu trinity—Brahmā, Vishṇu, and Śiva—the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. Of these Vishṇu was seen to be the most important and to lend himself most readily to the universalizing tendency. Śiva was more sectarian. Along with the increasing elevation of Vishṇu, there developed a belief in his incarnations, and these were at first arranged in temporal order, showing a certain progressiveness in adequacy and value. They begin with merely animal incarnations, e.g. fish, tortoise, and boar; then they approach and cross the boundaries between the animal and the human, in the conception of the man-lion. Within the human limits a new progression takes place from dwarf or incomplete man, through the deified and universalized epic

heroes, Rāma and Kṛishṇa, up to the incarnation in Kalki, who is still to come, and is to be the embodiment of all power and righteousness.

This temporal series of incarnations would hardly constitute polytheism so long as the sense of unity, as manifested in revealing purpose, is strong; but we have to remember the ineradicable tendency, frequently referred to in recent philosophical writing, to pass over from temporal to spatial categories. The result here would be that successive incarnations would become co-existent, and there would emerge in the minds of the worshippers the implications of rivalry and mutual exclusiveness.

The two most important incarnations of Vishṇu are Rāma and Kṛishṇa. The worship of Rāma is on the whole of a more elevated character, and appeals to the educated and cultured classes. The higher aspect of Kṛishṇa is a continuation of the tradition of the *Bhagavadgītā*, but popular religious fancy circles round the tale of his childish and youthful exploits which is given in the *Vishṇu* and the *Bhāgavata* Purāṇas. Thus the material is supplied for an erotic and somewhat sensuous worship, in which the spirituality is sometimes overlaid by baser elements, although, occasionally, the worship reaches a wonderful degree of religious intensity.

The worship of Śiva has not given rise to so many direct incarnations, though even he has such a multitude of names that he seems a complex of many deities. On the whole his worship is simpler in character, and calls forth a certain ascetic tendency. Popular interest centres rather in the female aspects of the deity in the various forms of Pārvatī, Durgā, and Kālī. This worship of the female aspect is not indeed by any means unknown in connection with the Vishṇu tradition. We have, e.g., the worship of Lakshmī along with Vishṇu, of

Sītā along with Rāma, and Rādhā along with Krishṇa. But Śāktism, as this worship of the female principle is called, acquires greater prominence in connection with Śaivism, and in Bengal especially, the Durgā and the Kālī *poojahs* or festivals have the firmest hold upon the popular imagination.

Of the other gods in the Hindu pantheon the two most prominent are Ganeśa and Skanda (or Kārtikeya), the sons of Śiva. Ganeśa is the patron of enterprises and a lover of wily stratagems. Kārtikeya is the god of war, in command of good demons, and his aid may therefore be invoked against the powers of evil. But there are crowds of minor deities in the Hindu pantheon, and the tendency to deify is inveterate. There is nothing which may not be seized upon as an excuse to set up a new god. The heroes of the epics and even of more vague tradition are deified, and outstanding men of modern times sometimes find it difficult to prevent worship being given to themselves. The *guru* who teaches the worshipper is not only a spiritual preceptor, but is himself divine. The leaders of any widespread religious cult almost always undergo a process of deification. The aboriginal religions contribute their quota of godlings, and each locality has its particular associations which have only to be vivified by the religious imagination in order to become worthy objects of worship. Mental processes are projected, objectified, and deified. Visitations of providence, such as earthquakes and pestilences, are assigned their presiding deities, who must be mollified. Unusual natural occurrences such as the fall of a meteor or a freak of reproduction are made occasions of new worship. Even the more ordinary processes and objects of nature, are, under the influence of animistic, or, on a higher level, Vedic beliefs, given their place amongst the multi-

tude of deities. There is nothing either in the heaven or earth which may not be worshipped as a particular deity. The general principle, according to Jacobs, who quotes from the *Pañchadaśī* vi., is 'that any kind of god or demigod, or anything in the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdoms, may be properly worshipped as a portion of Īśvara, and that such worship will bring a reward proportional to the dignity of the object worshipped.'[1] The sectarianism of Hinduism seems incurable. When one considers the present situation it seems impossible to introduce any systematization or any unity into the ever-changing congeries of beliefs. The essence of Hinduism lies in its diversity, and it is difficult exceedingly to define what Hinduism is or where it begins or ends. The great difficulty, and even impossibility, of definition are felt not only by outside critics, but also by Hindus themselves. In a recently published symposium on the 'Essentials of Hinduism,' we come across such candid acknowledgments of vagueness as the following—acknowledgments made freely by leading Hindus: 'Every belief or practice that is considered absolutely necessary by the Hindus of one corner of India is unknown or ignored by those of some other corner' (p. 7). And again: 'The Hindus have neither faith, practice, or law to distinguish them from others' (p. 8): '*He who believes and says he is a Hindu, is a Hindu*, and none can say to him nay' (p. 37).

The reason of all this vagueness lies just in the infinite capacity for deifying anything and everything which seems to be inherent in the Hindu mind, and which expresses itself in a multitudinous polytheism. The classic description of the tendency is to be found in the following frequently quoted

[1] *Hindu Pantheism*, p. 25.

passage from Monier Williams : ' There is, in truth, a strange mixture of aboriginal fetishism with Brahmanical Pantheism in the popular religion of the mass of the Hindu people. Everything great and useful—everything strange, monstrous, or unusual, whether good or evil—is held to be permeated by the presence of divinity. It is not merely all the mighty phenomena and forces of the universe—all the most striking manifestations of almighty energy—that excite the awe and attract the worship of the ordinary Hindu. There is not an object in heaven or earth which he is not prepared to worship—rocks, stocks and stones, trees, pools and rivers, his own implements of trade, the animals he finds most useful. The noxious reptiles he fears, men remarkable for any extraordinary qualities—for great valour, sanctity, or even vice ; good and evil demons, ghosts and goblins, the spirits of departed ancestors, an infinite number of semi-human, semi-divine existences,—each and all of these come in for a share of divine honour or a tribute of more or less adoration. Verily the Hindu pantheon had a place for everybody and everything. The deities already described are merely the occupants of the most conspicuous niches.' [1]

Our previous study of Indian religion and philosophy, however, will have prepared us for the statement that this multifarious polytheism is but one side of the picture. Alongside of it there has existed the craving after the unity of the abstract idealism or the naturalistic combining Pantheism of the philosophical schools. The polytheistic diversity has failed to break up the philosophic unity, and the latter, on the other hand, has been unable to diminish the number of the popular gods. Pantheism and polytheism exist side by side, and there

[1] *Hinduism*, p. 169.

is a constant give and take between them. The gods are universalized into the All, and the All is diversified into innumerable manifestations. Even the same god is subjected at once to abstract and concrete interpretation by which he becomes either a mystical characterless unity or a collection of particular manifestations. This is perhaps specially the case with the manifestations of Śiva. Thus we have in India at one and the same time the 'vastest polytheism which the world has known' and a 'profound philosophy of unity.' The combination is described in the most definite way by Nehemiah Goreh, in his *Rational Refutation*, p. 195: 'Whoever, therefore, hearing that the Vedānta believe in Brahma without qualities, infer that they reject Vishṇu, Śiva, and the rest of the pantheon, and that they discountenance idolatry and such things, and that they count the Purāṇas and similar writings false, labours under gross error.'

The question which specially concerns us is the reason of this combination. How is it that polytheism has flourished alongside of the purer philosophy of Pantheism? How is it that the latter has, despite its sometimes supercilious and exclusively intellectual attitude to the religion of the masses, never felt constrained to oppose and reform polytheism, but has even supported and encouraged it? Have we here simply a case of the masses being untouched by the religion of the intellectual few? Is it simply an historical contradiction, moving us merely to non-explanatory surprise? Or is there some causal link between Pantheism and polytheism which makes it inevitable that they should dwell side by side, the emergence and persistence of polytheism being just what might be expected in a country where Pantheism is the prevailing philosophical and religious attitude. We are inclined

to the last supposition, that, even while the polytheism of India may not be exactly the 'counterpart of the higher thoughts which disclose themselves to the sympathetic student of India's literature,' these higher thoughts are not without their influence upon the popular religion.

It does not seem possible to explain—or rather refuse to explain—this combination of contrasts by suggesting that it is simply another instance of the religion of the few failing to win interest amongst and exert influence upon the masses. There is, of course, in all lands a distinction between the religion of the cultured and the religion of the uncultured. But in India, which possesses, as we have seen, the 'vastest polytheism the world has ever known,' this combination seems to call for additional explanation. There is more in it than simply distinction. Further, even in India rich and poor meet in thought before God ; we have a right to expect influence of thought upon life here as elsewhere—to expect that higher religious thought will control and modify practices opposed to it—if so be that they are indeed opposed. Christianity, e.g., has been subjected to much popular degradation, but there is no Christian country where the want of culture expresses itself in polytheism to the extent that it does in India. Yet, at first sight, it might seem as if the fundamental religious thought of India—the emphasis on unity—would be more opposed to polytheism than even the fundamental thought of Christianity. Nothing is gained by urging that this distinction has been definitely accepted by the intellectuals of India themselves in the acknowledgment that there must be one religion for the masses and another for themselves. Long ago Prof. H. H. Wilson seemed to think that this was a sufficient explanation of the phenomenon,

and emphasized again the distinction between the common people 'who addressed their hopes and fears to stocks and stones, and multiplied by their credulity and superstition the grotesque objects of their veneration,' and the few 'of deeper thought and wider contemplation who plunged into the mysteries of man and nature, and endeavoured assiduously, if not successfully, to obtain just notions of the cause, the character, and consequence of existence.'[1] Prof. Wilson traced the consciousness of a distinction of this sort back even to the Vedas. But the question is not one simply of the reality of the distinction or of the general awareness of it by those who made it, but rather of the reason for the distinction and the continuance of it. The parallel existence of two opposing attitudes calls for some explanation. Why is it, as Sir Alfred Lyall puts it, that 'the Brāhman has always been too ready to regard with melancholy indifference the innumerable fantastic forms and appearances of the religious idea, and to observe patiently the heavy clouds of human error settling down over every glimpse of the true light that reaches the lower earth?'[2] There must have been some reason for this cold indifference—something which prevented alike the sympathetic elevating efforts of evangelism and the destructive influences of reformation. Why is it that the fundamental religious thought of India has not been able to break through the barrier of class distinction and purify the beliefs of the masses as the prevailing religious ideas of other religions and countries have done? Why was it prevented from having the destructive effect upon superstition and pernicious custom which might have been expected of it? The most reasonable answer seems to be that the

[1] *Religious Sects*, i. 1. [2] *Asiatic Studies*, i. 2.

opposition between Pantheism and polytheism is not so thorough-going as appears on the surface—that Pantheism is really a secret friend of polytheism, encouraging and sustaining it. There is, therefore, no need either of the elevation of love or the reformation of wrath. An understanding may easily be come to between forces which are not really opposed to one another.

Thus it seems a mistake to press to an extreme the contrast between Pantheism and polytheism, or to express excessive surprise that India has never succeeded in believing effectively her pantheistic formula that there is but one God and that all the gods are but names of one. Barth, e.g., says : ' In spite of all her high aspirations, we must say that, taken in the mass, India has in practice remained polytheistic.' [1] We feel inclined to take exception to the phrase ' in spite of all her high aspirations,' and would substitute for it ' because of the nature of her high aspirations.' Our argument is that it is just this nature which explains her continuance in polytheism. We are also unwilling to share the surprise which Dr. Wilkins expresses when, after mentioning the unity of the Godhead as one of the universal beliefs of Hindus, he says, ' This will seem strange to those who hear of the vast number of deities worshipped by the Hindus.' [2] The surprise rises into astonishment with Dr. Hopkins—' If surprised at the height of early Hindu thought, one is yet more astonished at the permanence of the inferior life which flourishes beneath the shady protection of the superior.' [3]

We do not think that either surprise or astonishment is called for. On the contrary, there is an integral connection between the pantheistically-

[1] *Religions of India*, p. 255.
[2] *Modern Hinduism*, p. 315.
[3] *Religions of India*, p. 473.

tinged higher religious thought of India and the popular polytheism, with its depressing consequences. We do not mean, of course, to suggest that these pantheistic influences are working openly in the minds of the simple polytheist and felt by him to confirm him in his faith. But we hold that, wherever the deeper thought of the land has actually influenced the worshipper, it has strengthened rather than weakened his trust in his many gods. Further, even as regards the cultured people themselves, their philosophical attitude has never impelled them to the expulsion of polytheism, but has rather made them peculiarly receptive of it. Fairbairn draws from the religious history of India a warning against the danger of Pantheism, grounded on just this connection: 'We live in a day when Pantheism has made a peculiarly impressive appeal to the imagination of the poet and the reason of the man of science, and has appeared as a more sublime and more reasonable belief than monotheism. But this is an opinion which the history of religion refuses to justify. Hinduism is here signally significant. . . . It shows us, as an historical matter of fact, how Pantheism has been used to vindicate the most extravagant polytheism and the grossest and most degraded cults. It can make a deity out of a man or a monkey or a snake or a tree; it can find a reason for the apotheosis of the most elemental passions; for the worship of the fierce and hideous Kālī, as for the practice of the severest austerities; and in all this its logical consistency is complete, for it has no ideal save the deification of the actual, and its ultimate truth is the right of what is, to be.'[1]

The connection between Pantheism and polytheism is comparatively easy to establish in relation

[1] Address in Boston.

to the more naturalistic phase of Pantheism. If *All is God*, then faith may have centre everywhere; but if it has centre *everywhere* it may have centre *anywhere*. The devotion which is properly attributable only to the All may be concentrated on the parts, and any lurking illogicality which may lie concealed in the transition will be still further hidden by the consideration that intensity of devotion has a certain dissolving effect upon limits of the particular and allows a facile merging of the individual in the All. Perhaps at first worship will be concentrated upon the more immediately useful parts of the whole, but when the tendency attains its full strength, mere existence becomes sufficient to constitute worthiness for worship. It is forgotten that existence contains both desirable and undesirable elements, and that if the undesirable, or even the less desirable, is taken as an object of concentrated worship, it is apt to acquire too great prominence in the thought and life of the worshipper. If no account is taken of distinctions of worth, the lower is sometimes worshipped at the expense of the higher. The effect of Pantheism is, no doubt, good in strengthening the immediate appeal of the divine, but its effect is decidedly *not* good in other respects. It introduces no discrimination of worth, and so permits a polytheism which often has little regard to the ethical character of the objects of worship. Pantheism is essentially conservative—it is, according to the quotation just given, a deification of the actual, admitting that the claims of existence and worship are co-extensive. It thus easily encourages a polytheistic tendency in which the human heart goes out towards the near and the obvious, the immediate objects of the senses, what people do and say rather than what they ought to do and say. Pantheism and polytheism agree

in dispensing with an elevating power, and therefore they walk together. Both are uncertain in their touch upon ethics, and the natural uneasiness of the developing moral consciousness is lulled to sleep by the philosophical justification which Pantheism appears so readily to provide. This absence of a sense of worth and of degrees of value — which, of course, appears most clearly in the ethical sphere, may also be treated more generally and used to explain the failure of Pantheism to introduce any systematization into the bewildering chaos of polytheistic forms.

It is probable, however, that we may find in the negative and abstract form of Pantheism a still fuller explanation of the prevalence of polytheism alongside of it. We have seen that the culminating Vedānta philosophy, in its abstract phase, consisted in turning away from ordinary experience, and getting rid of it by the application of the category of *māyā*. We also found that this procedure of thought was often severely intellectual and cold, and resulted in a view of life which emptied our ordinary occupations of their importance. It thus failed entirely to satisfy the masses. It was inevitable, therefore, that there should be a reaction in the direction of a more emotional religion, or, dismissing the allusion to temporal sequence which is implied in the word ' reaction,' we might say that the intellectual and abstract type of religion failed to satisfy a large part of human nature, and, therefore, an emotional type grew up alongside of it and persisted, not so much in spite of it as because of it. By default, the way was clear for the outflow and expression of the warm feeling native in the *bhakti* religions. Pantheistic abstraction had dismissed the claims of personality, but these were emphasized again in the various devotions of polytheism which

peopled the empty world with innumerable creations of fancy.

This *bhakti* attitude seems to us to be the underlying impulse towards polytheism. Sir George Grierson, indeed, in his article on *Bhakti Marga* in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, would dispute this connection. He holds that *bhakti* expresses itself in a distinctly monotheistic tendency. We would suggest, on the contrary, that while it may be the explanation of a subjective and temporary monotheism, it really issues in an objective polytheism. In his intensity of devotion, the worshipper may indeed single out one particular god, and so adore him as to make him for practical purposes supreme and universal. But no rational ground is assigned for this supremacy and universality, and it therefore remains a merely individual affair. Other worshippers may take up the same attitude to another god, and indeed even the particular worshipper we are considering may, with comparative ease and celerity, change the object of his devotion.

The effect of the Vedānta conception of ordinary experience is to diminish the reality and therefore the importance of this experience. What might be called the factuality of the phenomenal becomes a matter of indifference, and the imagination may run riot within it and invent any number of gods under the influence of emotional fervour. The content of belief ceases to be normative and the whole stress is laid upon the subjective and emotional attitude. The intensity of the feeling becomes all-important, and the worshipper may develop unrestrained the resources of feeling, allowing free play to the admittedly vivifying influence of the feeling upon imagination. We are thus within sight of an explanation of the bewildering variety of the objects of devotion. The nearer object—

the idol in itself—may call forth feeling and therefore it will be sufficient. The *guru* or the priest may be made the object of extravagant devotion on the basis of the admiration he may excite. Indeed, whatever may arouse feeling may be taken as thereby proving its claim to worship.

Sometimes this receptivity is regarded as a sign of broad-minded tolerance. It may be argued that Pantheism, by thus accepting the varieties of polytheism, performs a useful function of purification and leads the minds of the worshippers gradually from the lower to the higher. But the value of the receptivity depends entirely upon the use that is made of what is received. There must be development of and judgment passed upon the material received before receptivity can be allowed to be praiseworthy. Good-humoured tolerance of what is acknowledged to be false is not broad-mindedness—it is rather a 'device to give plausibility to fables.' Receptivity in the narrow sense of mere acceptance, is comparable to empty space. Empty space is abundantly receptive of all forms, but we do not on that account prefer empty space to filled space. The truly broad-minded man is not one whose mind is a blank, but one whose mind is rich in categories by means of which he can manipulate a great variety of experience and leave nothing unrelated or unutilized. He is one, at least, who has found a dominating idea which will bring all other ideas within its sweep. Yet when Hinduism is praised on account of its catholicity, this distinction between negative and positive receptivity is frequently overlooked. Receptivity, to have value, must be accompanied by control and systematization.

But a receptivity which has no grasp upon a coherent system of reality, which is destitute of thought-forms, and is constituted entirely by senti-

mental outflow of feeling, cannot possibly do us the highest service in the religious sphere. Feeling is essentially non-normative. Pure feeling, as has been said, may rise to the heights of heaven, but it may also descend to the depths of hell. If love is everything, the divine love may be degraded to the level of the lowest human passion and become merely erotic. Want of restraint in emotion carries with it a dangerous loosening of the bonds of morality. It is here that we find an explanation of the low moral tone of polytheism, and for this Pantheism must be held largely responsible. For, through the influence of the philosophical creed which has been accepted, polytheism is assigned to a world from which meaning has been withdrawn and in which, consequently, moral considerations are of subordinate importance. No authority is left anywhere in the world of our ordinary actions, and antinomianism is the result. The consciousness of divine grace, experienced through feeling, is all-important. One who can rise to an intensity of feeling becomes thereby a saint, and everything is holy for the saint. He is above law, and no sin may be attributed to him. It matters not what the object of his devotion may be, provided only that he grasp this object with sufficient fervour of devotion. If he die with the name of his god upon his lips this is sufficient to atone for a life filled with sin. Wilson expresses this attitude in the most uncompromising manner: 'The other precept is the absolute sufficiency of faith alone, wholly independent of conduct, to ensure salvation. Entire dependence upon Kṛishṇa, or any other favourite deity, not only obviates the necessity of virtue but sanctifies vice. It matters not how atrocious a sinner a man may be, . . . if he die with the words Hari or Kṛishṇa or Rāmā upon his lips and the

thought of him in his mind, he may have lived as a monster of iniquity—he is certain of heaven.'[1]

Further, the devotee who is under the influence of this emotional religion which Pantheism permits, does not demand that his gods themselves should be moral. Indeed, though he usually makes free use of the white-washing conception of symbolism, he often frankly confesses that they are non-moral, and that he would not like them to be in close relations with his family. As Dr. Barnett says: 'A Hindu is surprised, even shocked, when we call on him to apply to his gods the same moral standards as he applies to his own life. He willingly admits that some of the deeds ascribed to his gods would be most sinful if performed by men; but then they are done by gods *whose nature transcends the conditions of human thought*.'[2] The italics are ours, and the phrase italicized strengthens the argument that an exaggerated transcendentalism may not only hamper the exercise of human thought in regard to the gods, but may lead to their exemption from moral judgments. Immorality is excused simply because the doer is a god, and disapproval may be kept at a still greater distance by remembering that the gods are despots who may not be called to account for their actions any more than human despots, and that an action which would be a sin in a man may be, in relation to a god, a merely sportive impulse to which moral criticism is altogether inapplicable.

Use is also made of the conception of *māyā* for the purpose of excusing the actions of the gods. They belong to the realm of illusion, therefore why should we trouble about their morality? The whole idea of incarnation is a concession to human weakness. And if any particular incarnation, taken

[1] *Religion of the Hindus*, ii. 67. [2] *Heart of India*, p. 60.

as a whole, is a concession to human weakness, there is no harm in ascribing to the god certain qualities which may be very closely connected with human weakness.

The fact that meaning has been taken out of the world opens the door to all sorts of extravagances. The lower images of the imagination make the first appeal, and often occupy the whole field of religious vision. Pantheism can place no limits of meaning or purpose on the phantasies of polytheism—extravagance has full play. It is curious that this want of restraint may be united with a blind obedience to authority. If no rational proof is either sought for or given of the validity of an object of devotion, then this is often accepted on the mere authority of a teacher. Dr. Inge well describes the mood of mind which is here referred to: 'The mystic who refuses to analyse or criticize his intuitions is often baffled by the formlessness and emptiness of his religious conceptions, and so tends to fall back upon the clearly defined images or symbols which his church provides. He *accepts them on authority*[1] because he is not interested in the proof of them, and would even value them less if they were based upon ordinary evidence. He needs them only as helps to his imagination. But they may *easily* become so indispensable to him that he will become as stiff a dogmatist as if his faith really rested on external authority. The typical *dogmatist is a confused half-mystic whose intuitive faith is neither strong enough nor clear enough to bring him strength and comfort.*'[2] Blind dogmatism is closely associated with the emotional grounds of polytheism, and may perhaps be reckoned as a religious asset by the polytheist.

It is impossible, on the basis of abstract Pantheism,

[1] Italics mine.

[2] *Faith and its Psychology.*

to get any true idea of revelation. If the whole world is unmeaning, the Supreme cannot reveal Himself in it. The multifarious incarnations become concealments of reality rather than revelations of it, and in this we find an additional explanation both of the excessive variety of the religious manifestations and the indifference to their content. Just as there is only one way of telling the particular truth about a particular situation, but an infinite number of ways of concealing that truth, so, if the incarnations of the Supreme are concealments and not revelations, they may be infinite in number. And this consideration is closely allied with an indifferent attitude to the character of the concealment. We are not very particular as to the quality of the clothes which we are to use merely for the purposes of a disguise.

A particularly evil consequence of the philosophic support which polytheism receives from Pantheism is that the influence of the latter prevents us from applying any criterion to the reality of the gods of the former. In other lands polytheism is exposed to criticism because it fails to bring us into touch with reality. But in India no such standard of reality may be applied. The whole quest after a reality which may have qualities attributed to it, has, under the influence of the negative Vedānta, been condemned as hopeless. The Indian worshipper has therefore no inducement to criticize his gods from this point of view, and may thus be too easily content with them. The world, as his philosophy presents it to him, is without system or purpose, and therefore does not make him discontented with an unsystematized congeries of gods. There is no increasing light of revelation, no value in history to teach him his mistakes. Therefore the number of incarnations may be multiplied

according to his fancy. He does not, as a rule, desire to go beyond those incarnations, because he knows that if he does so his desire will remain unsatisfied. If his gods fail him there is nothing beyond. So, critical examination would simply leave him in a worse plight than he was in before, and on the principle that 'half a loaf is better than no bread,' he refuses to undertake such a critical examination. And why should the cultured man disturb the faith of the simple polytheist when he has nothing better to offer than the faith the latter already possesses? Thus the polytheist is allowed to remain permanently satisfied with a lower good. Even within the limits of his illusory multitude of incarnations he can look for no progress. The new incarnation is not necessarily an advance upon the preceding; it may minister only to a restless desire for change, and may increase the pride of the worshipper in his own faculty of invention. He can expect no rational order. We can make progress in the spiritual realm only by surrendering ourselves to the influence of wider aspects of reality. But, if there is no reality revealing itself to us in ever-widening extent, there is no incentive to progress, and nothing to open our eyes to the miserable inadequacy of the polytheistic attitude. Polytheism remains secure in twilight of *māyā*, and the souls of the worshippers continue to slumber.

We conclude, then, that in the abstract Pantheism of India lies one of the main causes of the persistence of its polytheism, and that this polytheism will be ineradicable until the conception of the Supreme ceases to be abstract—until a vision of God, of one God, is attained which will attract the love of the worshipper and prevent its being dissipated among gods many and lords many. Until reality is restored to the world of our ordinary experience, moral

demands will be without foundation either as regards the worshipper or the worshipped. The mind of the worshipper will have no effective craving for intelligibility, even though it may be profoundly dissatisfied with unintelligibility. His intellect is denied free play, and in his religious life he will narrow himself until he becomes a creature of feeling only. He will seek an object to satisfy this feeling in the products of his own unrestrained imagination, calling these products by the name of gods, and, in the midst of an unmeaning world, attempting to satisfy himself by giving them the worship of his heart. He seems to have no choice between this partial satisfaction on the one hand and emptiness on the other. In the meantime, perhaps, Pantheism blinds the worshipper to the inadequacy of the satisfaction, but this blindness is bound to pass away as the light of knowledge increases, and it will be an evil day for India if, when she becomes aware of the crudeness of polytheism, the awakening is only to a consciousness of loneliness in a spiritually empty world. *Such a disastrous result can be avoided only if the fundamental thought of India is transformed, only if, in place of the abstract Pantheism, she may arrive at a conception of the Supreme which will both hasten the realization of the inadequacy of polytheism and satisfy the needs and aspirations of the awakening soul.* The Indian worshipper needs and is seeking for a reality warmer and fuller than can be provided for him by the abstractions of an intellectualistic philosophy.

We lay at the door of Pantheism the charge of failing in its duty in regard to the corruptions of polytheism. It has been calling peace where there is no peace, and it must give place to a philosophy which will make possible the conception of a God who is the source of all purpose and the foundation

of all righteousness, who has already revealed Himself in a real world of history, and will yet more fully reveal Himself for the completion of the individual life in clearness of thought and purity of thought and action.

CHAPTER XV

PANTHEISM IN THE HIGHER RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF MODERN INDIA

Throughout the nineteenth century, and during the early years of the twentieth century, there have been many signs of such an awakening as we have alluded to at the close of the last chapter. This awakening has taken place, indeed, within narrowly circumscribed circles, but these circles have contained men whose influence upon national thought has been far-reaching and deep. Their teaching has led to a growing consciousness of the inadequacy of polytheism, and a distinct tendency, in some cases at least, towards such a conception of the Supreme as that which we have just indicated. The conception has not been so fully reached as might have been expected in view of the general advance in culture and enlightenment; and of these limitations we may have to investigate the causes. But, nevertheless, an unmistakable advance has been made. Thought has become clearer, worship has been purified, and an impetus has been given in the direction of moral and social reform such as we failed to discover in connection with the more popular forms of religion.

It is now our task to study this modern religious thought in India, and we may do so under three headings: I. The Development of Thought in the Brahmo Samaj; II. The Teaching of Swāmī Vivekānanda; III. The Literary and Philosophico-

religious Movement associated with the name of Rabindranath Tagore.

One or two preliminary observations may be made. In the first place, we do not regard these three groups as representative of the whole of the religious and philosophical thought of modern India. There are many highly cultured and influential men who remain unaffected by the tendencies indicated by the above headings. Inasmuch, however, as their attitude is on the whole conservative, and they are mainly engaged in handing on, in an only slightly modernized form, the teachings of the orthodox philosophies or in developing a special variety of polytheism, their contributions hardly call for separate treatment. In any study of specifically modern Indian thought they must give place to teachers who have introduced and developed certain new elements, or who have at least become the centres of a school, or within recent years the founders of a definite religious movement. Further, we must again draw attention to the limited scope of our inquiry even in regard to the groups of thinkers above enumerated. We are concerned primarily with the existence and the influence of pantheistic elements in the teaching of the representatives of these groups and not with their teaching as a whole. We gladly bear testimony to the forceful and elevating character of their teaching, and recognize that much more than Pantheism has entered into their systems of doctrine and has contributed to this forcefulness and reforming power. But we are chiefly concerned to trace the influence of Pantheism, if any such influence there be, and to attempt some characterization of this influence and some estimation of its effect upon the other elements in the conceptions of truth and life held by these teachers.

The Brahmo Samaj.

Although many different points of view are represented amongst the teachers of the Brahmo Samaj, we find that they for the most part agree in one point, viz. in their reforming zeal, and more particularly in their usually uncompromising opposition to idolatry. Occasionally, indeed, this opposition, implicitly and even explicitly, breaks down; but, there is no doubt whatsoever that their attitude in this respect is mainly one of stern disapproval, and their denunciations frequently approach an extreme of violence which has rarely been approached by even the most orthodox heirs of non-Indian religious tradition. If, then, in Brahmo doctrine we find pantheistic elements, we shall not expect that the effect of the working of these elements will be of precisely the same character as we observed in connection with the popular forms of religion discussed in the last chapter. We shall not expect to find Pantheism leading *directly* to encouragement and toleration of polytheism, though we may discover—to our surprise, perhaps, if the denunciations of idolatry are still ringing in our ears—that some of the indirect results are not so far removed from such encouragement and toleration. It should be premised, however, that the admission of an antagonism between Brahmoism and idolatry and an indication at the same time that there are pantheistic elements in Brahmoism does not at all weaken our former contention that Pantheism as a rule encourages polytheism. We admit, and gladly admit, that we find in Brahmoism no crowning illustration of this contention; but, at the same time, such illustration is not altogether absent, and it may well be that, as regards the general tendency, the pantheistic elements are

prevented from having their full effect in Brahmoism by the presence of counteractive influences of a healthier character. It should also be premised that our attention is now turned in another direction. While we argue that Pantheism encourages polytheism, it does not follow that the effects of Pantheism are exhausted in such encouragement. It may well have other effects, and it is some of these other effects which, in connection with the teaching of the Brahmo Samaj, we have primarily to consider.

We have not to go far for illustration of the fact that Brahmoism is in general opposed to polytheism, and that the effects of Pantheism must in this connection be looked for mainly in another direction. In the works of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of Brahmoism, we find outspoken criticism. In one passage he speaks as follows: 'Idolatry, as now practised by our countrymen, must be looked upon with great horror by common sense as leading directly to immorality and destructive of social comfort. For every Hindu who devotes himself to this absurd worship constructs for that purpose a couple of male and female idols, sometimes indecent in form, as representatives of his favourite deities; he is taught and enjoined from his infancy to repeat the history of these, as well as their fellow deities, though the actions ascribed to them be only a continued series of debauchery, sensuality, falsehood, ingratitude, breach of trust, and treachery to friends. There can be but one opinion respecting the moral character to be expected of such a person, who has been brought up with sentiments of reverence to such beings, who refreshes his memory relative to them almost every day, and who has been persuaded to believe that a repetition of the holy name of one of these deities, or a trifling present to his image or his devotees, is sufficient not only to

purify and free him from all crimes whatsoever, but to procure him future beatitude.' Again, in another passage he rebukes well-meaning but ill-informed Europeans who 'feel a wish to palliate and soften the features of Hindu idolatry, and are inclined to inculcate that all objects of worship are considered by their votaries as emblematical representations of the Supreme Divinity.' [1] The trust deed of the church building which the Rajah erected bears the words that 'no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, portrait, or likeness of anything shall be admitted within the building.'

The opinion on idolatry of the Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, who was the next leader of the Brahmos, is indicated in the second vow of the 'Brahmo Covenant' which he introduced. The vow is: 'I will worship no created object as the creator.' It is said that in his youth he would wander away from his house in order to avoid taking part in any idolatrous ceremony. One of the leading Brahmos of to-day says that the Maharshi 'banished polytheism and idolatry once for all from the reformed society he founded.' [2] It was the same with Keshub Chunder Sen, the third and probably the greatest leader of the Brahmo community. In his 'Appeal to Young India' he states the urgent necessity of reform in four directions: viz. in regard to Idolatry, Caste, Marriage Customs, and the Zenana. He argues that 'idolatry is the curse of Hindustan, the deadly canker that has eaten into the vitals of Hindu society' (p. 8), and indicates that it would be an insult to the intelligence of his audience to suggest that they cherished 'reverence for the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon,' or that they believed 'in the thousand and one

[1] Introduction to *Abridgement of the Vedānta.*
[2] Tattvabhushan, *Philosophy of Brahmoism*, p. 15.

absurdities of their ancestral creed.' Again, in his *Lectures in India* (p. 205), he speaks of ' the vast and varied pantheon of the Hindu Theology, which has degraded the nation and paralysed its religious spirit.' We shall find, indeed, that Keshub did not always maintain this rigorous attitude towards idolatry, but we note here that he is formally and originally at least in agreement with the main tradition of Brahmo teaching.

Having sufficiently differentiated Brahmoism from popular Hinduism in regard to the respective attitudes to polytheism and idolatry, we may now turn to the question of the presence of pantheistic elements in the former. In this relation we shall concentrate attention on the teaching of Keshub, and shall make only a brief reference to his two great predecessors, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, and the Maharshi Debendranath. With these latter Pantheism was largely a traditional inheritance, of the influence of which they were not always conscious, and whose character as Pantheism they did not always fully recognize.

Rajah Ram Mohan Roy regarded the Upanishads as the source of his inspiration and the basis of his teaching. According to Keshub, the Rajah did not profess to be the founder of a new creed ; he was simply the reviver of an old one. He appealed to the old Shastras in support of his protest against idolatry, and his aim was to restore Hinduism to its primitive purity.[1] Pundit S.N. Tattvabhushan compares the Rajah's attitude to the Upanishads to that of the mediaeval scholastic. He suggests also that the Rajah included Śaṅkara within the scope of his blind devotion. From the latter teacher it is alleged that he ' never consciously and intentionally differs.' [2] It is to be expected, then, that the

[1] Cf. Keshub's *Discourses*, p. 70.
[2] Tattvabhushan, *Philosophy of Brahmoism*, p. 51.

result of this scholastic deference to the authority of Śaṅkara will be an appropriation of the pantheistic interpretation of the Upanishads which is connected with the name of that great commentator, and this is what we find. The highest form of worship, as inculcated by the Rajah, consists in the 'adoration of One only without a second'—the One being revealed as our very Self. The universe is an emanation from the one Supreme Being, and in regard to the reality of the emanation there is considerable doubt.

It has been said that 'for years the religion of Rajah Ram Mohan Roy's association was not the monotheism he was anxious to see established, but the ancient Pantheism of the country,'[1] and we shall touch upon one or two consequences of this Pantheism. In the first place, it seems to make him sit loose to every form of creed, so much so that his theology owes its comprehensiveness mainly to its vagueness. It is difficult to discover what the opinions really were which he 'grappled to his soul.' Theists, Christians, Moslems and Hindus have all claimed him as one of themselves, and it is difficult either to accept or reject the various claims. But while this catholicity is in many respects admirable when contrasted with intolerance, it decidedly diminishes the force of his teaching, and the practical consequence to which—in the second place—we are constrained to refer is that his opposition to idolatry was greatly weakened. He became too kindly a reformer. We have seen that a clause relating to idolatry appears in the trust deed of the building set apart for religious services. Another clause of this deed was—'nothing recognized as an object of worship by other men should be spoken of contemptuously there.' This is a

[1] R. C. Bose, *Brahmoism*, p. 40.

sentiment worthy of all admiration, if we are content with the prohibition merely, but there often appears a tendency to associate with the prohibition a positive permission to make anything an object of worship. This tendency seems in the Rajah's writings to take the form of a modified approval of idolatry as suited for people of unenlightened understanding. He speaks of the Vedas as 'tolerating idolatry as the last provision for those who are totally incapable of raising their minds to the contemplation of the invisible God of Nature,' and of idolatrous rites as 'left to be practised by such persons only as, notwithstanding the constant teaching of spiritual guides, cannot be brought to see perspicuously the majesty of God through the works of Nature' (preface to *Muṇḍaka Upanishad*). In these words there seems to be a contempt for the religious capabilities of the common man, and a tendency towards an esoteric and private conception of religion, based on the principle of religious relativity, which we have seen to be specially connected with Pantheism. Keshub Chunder Sen tells us that, under the direction of the Rajah, the readings of the Vedas were held in a private room, and that only Brāhmans were allowed to assemble there. To be content to leave the lowest to worship the lowest must militate against the influence of the reforming spirit. We, of course, allow that the chief emphasis of the Rajah himself was upon the undesirability of the worship of the lowest rather than upon the restricted permission to continue in that worship; but we fear that many, since his day, have used his guarded permission as a cloak to cover their own lack of reforming zeal.

The teaching of the Maharshi Debendranath Tagore is only moderately traditional and partially pantheistic. His original position seems to have

been that the Vedānta, and particularly the Upanishads, supplied a basis for the Brahmo faith; but there is good reason to think that he persisted in this attitude only so long as he had not made a thorough study of the Upanishads. It is related that in 1845 four pundits were sent to Benares to make a thorough study of the ancient books, both Vedas and Upanishads. After their return the Maharshi's faith in the Upanishads as affording a suitable basis for religion was considerably shaken, and he was disposed to turn rather to intuition for support. One of his chief reasons for discarding the authority of the Upanishads was the presence in them of pantheistic doctrines. He seemed, however, to feel the need of some sort of infallible Scripture, and supplied the place of the Upanishads in their complete form by annotated selections from them and other sacred writings. This book was called the *Brāhma Dharma*, and became virtually authoritative for the section of the Brahmo Samaj which has most closely followed the Maharshi's teaching.

Thus we cannot find in his doctrines any very clear evidence of the influence of pantheistic ideas upon Brahmoism. But though the Maharshi discarded the Upanishads and gave as one of his reasons their abounding Pantheism, his teaching was not altogether unaffected by pantheistic ideas. As Keshub Chunder Sen, more appreciative than some modern critics of the quality of the Maharshi's study of the ancient books, says: 'His deep and diligent studies of Vedāntic writings, so full of pantheistic spiritualism, helped his early spiritual development' (*Discourses*, 80). The Upanishads, notwithstanding his formal rejection of them, still form a considerable part of the basis of the *Brāhma Dharma*. The author still feels the attraction of the abstract worship of the One without a second, and a more

naturalistic Pantheism would seem to be a possible though perhaps not a necessary support of such diffused and non-discriminated divinity as is suggested in Part I, Chapter X. : 'The Being Divine, who is in fire, who is in water, who is in plants and trees, and who pervadeth all the world.' In this quotation the distinction between the manifestation of God in nature and His identification with nature would seem to have become exceedingly fine. It would not be unreasonable, also, to find a modified Pantheism in the explanation of the admission of polytheistic deities which may be noticed in the same chapter.

To a pantheistic source, also, we may trace the sentimental and aesthetic, rather than ethical, character of the Maharshi's religion. There is no very intense view of evil or of sin. Sin is for the most part ignorance, and from the darkness of ignorance man may deliver himself by a certain degree of moral determination. No provision, apparently, is made for the weakness of the human soul, or for that situation in which the good is known and yet the evil is deliberately chosen. This non-ethical character of the Maharshi's religion is freely acknowledged by one belonging to the same religious persuasion—the Rev. P. C. Majumdar : 'Devendra's prayers were the overflow of great emotional impulses, stirred by intense meditation on the beauties and glories of nature. His utterances were grand, fervid, archaic, profound as the feelings were which gave them rise. But they seldom recognized the existence of sins and miseries in human nature, or the sinner's necessity for salvation. Devendranath had never received the advantage of a Christian training. His religious genius was essentially Vedic, Aryan, national, rapturous. . . . He believed all sinfulness and carnality to be the private concern

of each individual man, which ought to be conquered by resolute moral determination.'[1] Rapturous admiration of the glories of nature is, further, sometimes apt to develop into admiration of the actual in every sphere, including the sphere of human activity and human institutions. It thus becomes closely associated with a conservative mood of mind, and such a transition is not without illustration in the religious history of the Maharshi. As Keshub Chunder Sen says: 'In vain would we expect to find Debendranath occupying the front ranks of the battle-field of reform, doing desperate battle with absurd usages or institutions, reducing the old castles of error into ruins with single-handed valour, and purchasing triumph with hard sacrifices. This is quite foreign to his ideas and quiet mission. Not war, but peace is his watchword; not action, but contemplation. He summons us not to the stirring activities of social battles, but takes us into the closet and beside the altar . . . ' (*Discourses*, p. 79).

The branch of the Brahmo Samaj with which he was connected has shown itself conservative in many ways, and we have in our previous discussion discovered many reasons for connecting conservatism with Pantheism. His Pantheism was, however, not fully conscious, and was for the most part subordinated to other modes of thought more conducive to progress and more responsive to the ethical spirit. His mission is worthily described in the words of Keshub Chunder Sen as being to summon men to 'the worship of God as a living reality, in spirit and in love.' We welcome the emphasis which he lays upon the sweeter and more human elements in religion, and if at times the mystical rather overwhelms the ethical, we shall

[1] *Life of Keshub Chunder Sen*, p. 159.

ascribe this to the continuing influence of an older pantheistic point of view which he had largely, though not altogether, departed from. At the same time we must recognize that, though his Pantheism is not central, it is nevertheless not without a considerable degree of influence.

We may now turn to the third of the great Brahmo leaders, to one who had most to do with the nineteenth-century development of the Samaj, viz. Keshub Chunder Sen. His attitude to the traditional Pantheism of India might be said to have commenced in opposition and ended in a certain amount of sympathy and approval, though perhaps his *formal* opposition to pantheistic doctrines was never entirely abandoned. At first he was not inclined to go so far even as the Maharshi in dependence on the Upanishads or other parts of the Vedānta. This was mainly due to his aversion to any kind of external authority. He preferred a position closely akin to the Intuitional dualism of Reid and Hamilton, the latter of whom he describes as ' that unrivalled thinker.' He trusted to certain great principles of religion which were intuitively given with the immediacy of perceptual seeing and hearing. In the course of his mental development, however, he did not seem much inclined to rationalize these principles into a coherent system. His attitude towards them became more and more subjective and emotional, and to this extent his dualism is transcended and he becomes more closely attracted to the Vedāntic position of unity with the Divine under the influence of immediate ecstasy of feeling. He was strongly influenced by the Vaishnava elements in the popular faith and by the associated culture of *bhakti*, and the philosophical basis of this tendency was, as we have seen, an

emotionalized form of the Vedāntic doctrine according to which the individual is merged in the Supreme. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that his followers should almost immediately after his death describe his final attitude and theirs in terms such as the following: 'We need not say much about our return to the Vedānta. This is a known fact. The foundation of Brahmoism was laid upon the Upanishads. Although we have advanced, the foundation remains as it was. . . . In us and around us we must see one Pervading Spirit with our mental eye; this is what the Vedānta inculcates and this is what the Vedas tend to. It was left for the present dispensation to bring out all the elements that worked in the Vedāntic period and to give a connective link to the whole. Our return to the Vedānta has effected this.'[1] The tone of this passage is quite in accordance with the claim of Keshub himself that 'the voice of the Lord came unto the Church of the New Dispensation, saying, Clothe the science of the age in the language of ancient scriptures.' Sometimes the language of the ancient scriptures greatly modified the science of the age it was intended to clothe.

But we may leave aside in the meantime Keshub's attitude to traditional Pantheism as embodied in the sacred books, and consider the pantheistic elements in his own system of thought. Of avowed Pantheism there is very little, and, from the vigour of his denunciation of it, one would have expected that he would have gone to the extreme of avoidance. In his lecture on *The Future Church* he condemns the 'mistaken identification' of either mind or matter with the Creator. The identification of the human spirit with the Divine he holds to be due to excessive devotion to the human spirit

[1] *The Liberal and the New Dispensation*, June 1885.

and an exaggeration of its importance.[1] He recurs to this idea of Pantheism as based on pride in the lecture on *Who is Christ?*—'Hindu Pantheism in its worst form is pride, being based upon the idea that man is God.'[2] In his lecture on *Our Faith and Our Experiences*, he traces pantheistic error to excessive emphasis upon the Godward side of the relation—upon the 'encompassing presence of the Supreme Spirit,' and to a consciousness of the real presence of God which was so overpowering as to kill self-consciousness and make communion little better than absorption—'a drowning in the vast sea of illusion.'[3]

In other passages, also, he shows a full appreciation of the difference between true communion with God and pantheistic identity. He recognizes that contemplation is only one aspect of the religious life, and that there must be combined with it a full measure of activity.[4] He condemns the 'quietism of a trance' which belongs to Pantheism, and insists that activity of the individual soul must go to constitute the religious relation. Occasionally his criticism of Pantheism passes far beyond the limits of calm criticism of philosophical presuppositions and breaks out into vigorous denunciations and abusive epithets. He speaks of the formula *Aham Brahma* (I am God) as embodying a 'revolting doctrine,' and he continues in the same strain: 'Perish Pantheism. Thou hast dishonoured God and ruined man by sapping the foundations of religion and morality. In exhorting you to seek union with God by sacrificing humanity and putting on divinity, I am far from advocating the horrors of pantheistic deification. Between man and God there is an eternal distinction.'[5] He protests with

[1] *Lectures in India*, pp. 136 and 140. [2] Ibid., p. 388.
[3] Ibid., pp. 251 and 293. [4] Cf. ibid., ii. 385. [5] Ibid., p. 184.

all the vehemence of his soul against any confusion between Pantheism and his cherished doctrine of the communion of saints. 'This is not Pantheism,' he says. 'As far from Pantheism is this communion of saints as the north is from the south pole. Detestable Pantheism! Thou hast done incalculable mischief in India. This land has seen thy horrors as no other country has. Therefore thou shalt not be permitted to re-enact these horrors. We have had enough of this cursed Pantheism. No more!'

Western scholars, who have often been regarded as outside the pale and as tempted to criticize because of the depths of their ignorance, have rarely indulged in such denunciations of Pantheism. But at the same time, vigorous though Keshub's denunciation is, he was not prevented from recognizing in other portions of his writings the exceedingly valuable contribution of Pantheism to religious thought. What is more, he was not prevented from falling under the influences of even the less desirable tendencies in pantheistic thought.

We shall take up first his more explicit appreciation of Pantheism, with practically all of which it is possible to be in full agreement. In one passage he refers to the intensity of religious devotion which is India's peculiar heritage, and acknowledges the dependence of this intensity upon what is really the ancient pantheistic attitude, though he will not call it by this name. From the dawn of history India sang 'the glories of the Eternal Spirit.' 'Repeated and glowing descriptions of an all-pervading Spirit-God constitute the theology of primitive Hinduism.' This 'central and towering truth of early Hinduism' can hardly be dissociated from Pantheism, and honour should be given where honour is due. Keshub also emphasizes—and per-

[1] *Lectures in India*, p. 473.

haps over-emphasizes—the contribution of Puranic Pantheism to religious development. In the famous lecture upon *Who is Christ?* he illustrated the valuable elements in Pantheism by reference to the religious consciousness of Christ, and an appreciation of pantheistic mysticism undoubtedly helps us to understand the closeness of communion between Christ and the Father. When, however, the lecturer goes on to emphasize Christ's *active* self-surrender of will, and when we remember that Keshub had previously argued that quietism was an essential characteristic of Pantheism, we are inclined to bring a slight charge of inconsistency and to suggest that to call Christ ' a true pantheist ' is to assign to Pantheism a greater comprehensiveness than it really possesses. It is also to introduce into Pantheism an emphasis upon activity and upon the personality of the individual which are foreign to its very nature. But, apart from this criticism of his unjustifiable widening of the bounds of Pantheism, we are at one with Keshub in his appreciation of the double function of Pantheism in the religious life. It prevents science from becoming materialistic, and provides in the worship of the impersonal a certain starting-point from which we may rise far above Pantheism to a faith in a personal God. Pantheism enables us to take such a *total* view of the phenomena of nature that we may discern their spiritual character, may see in nature a glory that is divine, and advance to the worship of a Person who is also divine. Two passages may be quoted to illustrate this double transition. The first is from the lecture on ' Primitive Faith and Modern Speculation ': ' We firmly believe that God's spirit fills all space and is immanent in the universe. He is the force of all forces, the power of all powers. He it is who ever breathes life into creation, and ever

upholds it. He is everywhere the in-working, the omni-active Cause, the Life of all life, the central all-sustaining Energy. . . . We cannot rest satisfied with an endless concatenation of physical causes and material sequences. But we go farther and farther, beyond all possible causes that exist or may be conceived, till we come to that central Divine Person, the source and cause of all created spirits, the origin of all matter, who rules to-day, as before, the world of mind and matter by His holy fiat. . . . Our God is not the impersonal *It* of Pantheism, but the personal *He* of theism. It is in the recognition of such a God that science and religion harmonize. In geology and astronomy, in anatomy and physiology, in all physical sciences, the well-balanced mind discerns not merely wisdom but a wise and beneficent Will. We see the living God in every flower that blooms and every star that shines. Every line we read on the page of nature is inscribed by the hand of God; every material object we deal with is sacred, being His handiwork.' [1] In this passage the standpoint of Pantheism is explicitly transcended, but we can hardly fail to realize that it is Pantheism which has supplied the groundwork for the impulse towards transcendence, and that, in general, theism owes a considerable debt to pantheistic monism. In another passage Keshub shows with equal clearness how we may rise from a pantheistic appreciation of the various aspects of nature, by a process of synthesis, to a faith in the personal unity of God: 'Unite in a personal unity the various fragments of a divided Deity, scattered broadcast over the world, and adored separately in different ages by different schools of religion and philosophy. Bring all these broken units into one focus, and you will see in this

[1] *Discourses*, p. 39.

beautiful synthesis a perfect and harmonious whole, the very living God of the Universe, neither imagination nor abstraction . . . but the true God of heaven and earth. Not the pantheist's God, not the idolater's God, not the visionary's God, not the metaphysician's God, but the one personal God, full of wisdom and love, full of power and holiness and perfection.' [1]

We freely and fully admit the predominant place in Keshub's philosophy of religion of a belief in a personal God, and the quotations we have just given indicate clearly that predominance. We admit also that in these quotations, and many others, he shows a just appreciation of the true place of Pantheism and the contribution it may make to religious thought. But it must also be admitted that Keshub does not always maintain, as he does in these passages, the clear distinction between the theistic and the pantheistic position. He is frequently influenced more than he is willing to acknowledge, or perhaps more than he is himself aware, by less desirable elements in Pantheism.

He is frequently unable, e.g., to distinguish between communion with God and identity with God. When he desires to describe communion in its most intense form he frequently uses language which is altogether pantheistic, and this, too, occasionally in the same paragraph in which he condemns Pantheism. It is, no doubt, exceeding difficult to keep the two attitudes distinct, especially if, in any particular case, the relation which is being described is strongly touched with emotion; but it is, nevertheless, necessary to make the distinction if we are to escape the fundamental error of Pantheism of which Keshub shows himself so clearly conscious at other times. He points out that the aspiration

[1] *Lectures in India*, i. 405.

of millions of Hindus is for absorption in Godhead, and he holds that it is possible to satisfy this aspiration without giving them the 'poison of Pantheism' or without asserting the mischievous blasphemy of the idea that the worshipper and God are identical. But in the very next sentence he goes on to express approval of the fundamental idea of pantheistic absorption. He rightly points out that the religious craving is for union with God through the destruction of rebellious individuality, but he seems to have lost hold of the distinction, in this passage between individuality and personality, and he fails to realize that, while an anti-religious individuality must be sacrificed, personality need not and indeed cannot be sacrificed. He tells us, 'Man must forgo his proud and rebellious individuality, and so merge self-will in the will of God by devotion and love as to become one with Him, or there is no salvation.' Certainly 'proud and rebellious' individuality must go, but does it follow that the highest religious state is 'an extinction of the sense of duality,' or one in which 'the distinction between mine and Thine vanishes and not a trace of self is left behind'?[1] Surely even if 'our wills are ours to make them Thine' it does not follow that the personal possession of the will ceases when it is brought into harmony with the Divine. Perfect communion does not mean absolute unity.

The same confusion is illustrated in Keshub's treatment of the religious consciousness of Christ, which he attempts to describe in the following words: 'He saw His own spirit and he saw the Divine spirit also, and in deep *communion* he found the two *identified*. He felt he was but a drop, lost altogether in the vast ocean of the Divinity. Never did He think of self. There was no life at all in Him apart

[1] *Lectures in India*, i. 2. 16.

from Divinity. He dived deep into the Supreme Spirit, and there He lay immersed.' [1] Now we do not wish here to enter into the question of the relation between Christ and God, or to discuss whether this particular relation is best described as one of identity or one of communion; but our contention is that the two methods of description should not be used indiscriminately. The italics which we have introduced into the above quotation show that there is confusion on this point in the mind of the writer, and that he has been by no means able to distinguish clearly between the theistic and the pantheistic positions. When the same confusions appear in the account of the relation of the ordinary man to God, the consequences of which Keshub has elsewhere expressed his abhorrence are not unlikely to follow.

We may trace a certain pantheistic strain in Keshub's doctrine of *bhakti*. It seems to us that in minds of an emotional character *bhakti* becomes the natural expression of a pantheistic attitude. Such an attitude frequently finds difficulty in working itself out into a clearly stated intellectual position, or at least the intellectual statement which is arrived at is too abstract to satisfy human nature —as we have frequently seen. Also Pantheism cannot lead to definitely conscious consecration of the *will*. But on the emotional side it has free play, and the *bhakti* relation is peculiarly its mode of expression. It is, of course, true that *bhakti* often starts from a dualistic position—from devotion to a deity who is regarded as distinct from the worshipper and to whom acts of service may be rendered; but *bhakti* does not reach its full consummation until emotion has worked upon and transcended this duality and these external acts of service.

[1] *Lectures in India*, p. 381.

Therefore we contend that identity is ultimately the idea of the relation to the divine which is most akin to *bhakti*. It is instinct with subjectivity, and the subjectivity is emphasized when it is recognized to be divine. All differences vanish in a glow of emotion, and the vagaries even of the individual acquire authoritativeness. Such authority of the individual subject would be impossible if the theistic relation were clearly conceived, but when we have to deal with the facility of transition between the individual point of view and the universal which Pantheism makes possible, any difficulties being all the time disguised by emotional intensity, the dangers of mere subjectivity become apparent. The individual is apt to claim an authority which does not properly belong to him as an individual, the reason of the excessive claim being that through emotional stress the natural limits of the individual have been broken through.

There seems to be in certain portions of Keshub's writings a tendency to make too much of the connection between religious enthusiasm and madness. The ' terrific forces ' of the soul which sometimes break through all bonds, are referred to as if in connection with their operation we reached the highest type of religion. This extreme has been reached by a reaction from a purely intellectual and cold type of religion, and with such a reaction many will sympathize. But at the same time it is to be noticed that religious enthusiasm is apt to end in undesirable extravagances if it is not restrained by rational and objective considerations, and if we forget that we are nearest the divine when we are most thoroughly sane. It is dangerous to introduce any suggestion of the illuminating power of madness. The predominance of the *bhakti* attitude in Keshub's mind leads us to view with some suspicion

his doctrine of intuition. He inherited this doctrine from his Scottish philosophical ancestors, and occasionally argued as if his intuitions were of the same character as the principles of common sense which Reid had made an essential part of the system. Keshub thus describes the principles : ' Brahmoism is founded upon those principles of the mind which are above, anterior to, and independent of reflection —which the variation of opinion cannot alter or affect.' [1] And again : ' They are the native, constitutional, original truths, they are the voice of nature in the soul, and hence may be called the commandment of God.' [2] But with Keshub these principles received a much stronger emotional colouring than with the Scottish philosophers. They were various products of inspiration which required no proof, but which had simply to be asserted. They were used frequently to crush opposition to the more extraordinary schemes and ideas of his later years. In reply to all criticism of his plans, he was accustomed to plead direct inspiration or *adesh*. He took up a prophetic dictatorial attitude, regarding himself as commissioned by God to make known and enforce certain truths. In all controversies he claimed to have the truth of God on his side, and he was wont to vanquish his enemies by charging them with opposition to the will of God. He did not *always* repel with sufficient emphasis the tendency of some of his followers to elevate him to divine honours. It would seem that in all this he had to some extent fallen a victim to the temptation of pride, which, as we have previously seen, he alleged to be an inevitable consequence of the pantheistic identification of the creature and the creator.

He makes little attempt to subject his principles

[1] *Basis of Brahmoism, Essays*, ii. 42. [2] Ibid., p. 109.

to critical examination or reflection, neither does he so arrange them as to bring out their inner self-consistency. Indeed, he shows a somewhat lofty contempt for any efforts at 'deduction' in the Kantian sense. He does not seem to think it necessary to show that the categories he uses are necessary constituents of experience. In fact, he shows a lofty disregard for experience or for anything that savours of objectivity. The world of experience, according to his view, is on a lower level and is incapable of giving us guidance on religious matters. He does not seem at all to realize that the world of experience may be the manifestation of God.

This excessive subjectivity of the *bhakti* attitude is well brought out in a passage from the lecture on *Our Faith and its Experiences*.[1] In this passage there seems to be almost an assertion of the principle that the object worshipped does not matter so long as the emotional subjective state is satisfactory. Keshub holds that the chief virtue of the Brahmo religion lies in the fact that it is subjective whereas all other faiths are objective. But into the conception of objectivity he reads far more than is warranted. He seems to think that, if a faith has any element of objectivity in it, it is to that extent materialistic and the religion it gives rise to must be external. What though the saint be perfect, he argues, it is the mind of the worshipper which is the important thing. The essential religious value of the Christian Eucharist lies in its being a symbol of the subjectivity of religion. It signifies the appropriation of Christ into the inner soul of the worshipper. But is it possible to accept this identification of objectivity and externality in religion, and because we condemn the latter must we condemn the former also? The perfect saint

[1] *Lectures*, i. 257.

may certainly be of little use to the worshipper unless the worshipper also strives to be perfect, but the objective perfection of the saint may be a considerable factor, nay, even the determinative factor, in the subjective perfection of the worshipper. A man does not become a Christian so long as Christ remains external to his soul, but it is surely the objective Christ, both historical and risen, who is determinative of the subjective effect in the soul of the worshipper. This distinction has been strangely overlooked by both Keshub and his followers right down to the present time. They have been unstinted in their admiration of the idea of the Christ, but they have been curiously unscientific, and, in the broadest sense of the term, irreligious, in their failure to inquire for a sufficient reason for their admiration and in their rejection of the divinity of the historical in the world which God has made. This contempt for the objective we cannot but trace back to the abstract pantheistic influences which were at work in the mind of the most famous representative of the Brahmo Samaj.

To follow Keshub in his rejection of the object in worship would be to run into two dangers: it would be to miss the value of the objective which is worthy of worship, and to run the risk of selecting objects of worship which are altogether unworthy of worship. Both tendencies are illustrated in the teaching we are considering. Keshub had, on the whole, a profound contempt for history. It is, of course, true that he realized the value of great men and organized what were called 'pilgrimages' to them, during which seasons of contemplation of their lives and works the appropriate inspiration might be received. But the subjective effect seems to have been, latterly at least, the main consideration, and little attempt is made to give these great men

their proper place in the onward progress of history. They were somewhat spasmodic repeaters of universal truths suitable for the heightening of subjective religion, but did not themselves form part of a great objective manifestation of God. In his earlier years indeed, e.g. in his lecture on *Great Men* delivered in 1886, Keshub showed a much fuller appreciation of history as a manifestation of God: 'History,' he says, 'is a most sublime revelation of God, and is full of religious significance. It is a vast sermon on God's providence, with copious and varied illustrations.'[1] But fifteen years later we find him writing: 'I hate dead history. I abhor those places where dead men's bones are gathered. Those dismal and dark places I abominate and detest.'[2] And this growing dislike of history and this concentration of attention upon a merely subjective interpretation of it we are inclined, as already said, to attribute to the influence of an increasing tendency towards pantheistic subjectivity.

The other danger we have referred to is very close at hand. If the subjective is all-important, and if the objective is of little or no importance, then any object whatsoever may be counted worthy of worship. The swing of the pendulum takes place which we have so often noticed in connection with Pantheism. There is transition from the subjective to the objective without discrimination as to the details of the objective. In this way perhaps we may explain Keshub's growing fondness for the Vaishnava elements in religion and the influence upon him of Vaishnava devotees. His emotional religious nature became capable of attaching itself to any object of worship. He was also greatly attracted by the idea of the Motherhood of God, and one of the elements in the attraction was

[1] Page 56. [2] Page 347.

the kinship of this idea with the popular Hindu idea of Śakti, or female energy. Kali and other Hindu deities were practically admitted as worthy of worship, and he adopted, with a little transformation, many Hindu rites and ceremonies. His attitude to idolatry becomes almost friendly, in strange contrast to the vigorous opposition of his earlier years. In the *Sunday Mirror* of August 1, 1880, we find the following passage: 'Hindu . . . idolatry represents millions of broken fragments of God. Collect them together and you get the indivisible divinity. . . . Cheer up, then, O Hindus, for the long-lost Father from whom you have for centuries strayed away is coming back to you. The road is clear enough—it lies through your numerous Purānas and Epics. . . . We have found out that every idol worshipped by the Hindu represents an attribute of God, and that each attribute is called by a particular name. . . . Hence we would contemplate him with his numerous attributes. We shall name one attribute Saraswati, another Lakshmi, another Mahadeva, another Jagaddhatri, &c., and worship God each day under a new name, that is to say in a new aspect.' Keshub claims that the 'new dispensation' is an 'explanation of Pantheism and polytheism.' The conjunction of terms is noteworthy, and we sometimes fear that what was to be explained has influenced unduly the explanation offered.

This religious relativity is apt to pass into indiscriminate admiration, and then into a contentment with what has been and is rather than into an aspiration after what ought to be. The individual has abdicated to a certain extent his powers of discrimination and his powers of reaction. Emotional passivity may pass into ethical quietism. It is therefore no very surprising thing that we should

find in Keshub's teaching, alongside of his unquestionable reforming zeal, a certain tendency to rely upon the *consensus gentium* and to argue that the very fact that a faith or custom has existed for a long time, and has been held and practised by millions of men, is evidence in favour of its validity. Pundit Sivanath Shastri speaks of Keshub's conformity to prevailing ideas, and says that 'the effect of this relapse into the national error on the church as a whole has been quite chilling and deadening, as regards every form of good work or reform. Read the internal history of the more than 140 churches scattered all over India, and you observe an almost total blank with respect to acts of public usefulness and philanthropy.'[1] In view of the many progressive movements which Brahmoism has countenanced this seems to be a somewhat sweeping judgment, but we may well admit that Keshub's efforts after religious reform would have been much more vigorous and much more fruitful if he and his followers had remained at a greater distance from the conservative influences of Pantheism. Occasionally, also, there is evidence of an insufficient emphasis upon human freedom and responsibility. The possibilities of human action in the direction of evil are not sufficiently considered. The conception of destiny is used to reinforce a facile optimism. Man has a fixed destiny, and 'his destiny is not to follow either virtue or vice, according as his choice may lead him; he is destined to attain the former.'[2] This is no doubt very comforting, but if our destiny is to attain the good, why should we strive? May we not live at ease, knowing that in the end we shall reach the goal? We seem here to be on the verge of a pantheistic conception of an overwhelming power,

[1] *New Dispensation*, p. 61. [2] *Lectures in India*, ii. 123.

so resistless in its might as to leave little room for human freedom. The power is no doubt conceived as good, but we cannot so easily take quietistic refuge in the thought that this power will sweep on to its destined goal irrespective of all considerations of human co-operation. Keshub seems here to have departed from the theistic faith under the influence of which he, earlier in his teaching, laid stress upon the necessity of human co-operation, and the departure which he has thus made is not in the interests of human freedom and morality.

Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan, in his valuable book on the *Philosophy of Brahmoism*, criticized the doctrine of Keshub on the ground that he conceives of nature as simply a manifestation of the power of God. We do not think that this criticism is altogether justified in view of the quotation given above from *Primitive Faith and Modern Speculation*.[1] The more spiritual qualities of the Divine are there sufficiently indicated. But it is undoubtedly true that, under the influence, as we think, of pantheistic conceptions, Keshub fails to retain his hold upon the personal character of God. Emotionalism is always apt to find refuge in the thought of overwhelming might, however religiously this may be conceived. It does not sufficiently move us to the conception of anything more than a divine activity corresponding to our passivity. And the pundit is right in pointing out that intuition is hardly more satisfactory in leading to a fuller interpretation of God. He criticizes Keshub's separation between Intuition and Reason, and would interpret our relation to God rather along Hegelian lines. The Divine self-consciousness reveals itself in the human self-consciousness, which latter must not be taken as individual but as universal. This interpretation is

[1] *Discourses*, p. 39.

certainly a step in the right direction, inasmuch as it saves us from arbitrary subjective dogmatism and bases truth upon the operation of the universal Reason. But have we yet escaped from the dominance of the less desirable elements of Pantheism? If the Divine self-consciousness and the human self-consciousness are one and the same, have we not lost the basis of human personality? The pundit indeed tries to escape from an absorption which destroys all differences. He points out that attention may be concentrated 'on the essential unity of the Divine and the human self to such an extent that you may miss their difference, and so obstruct the course of true *bhakti*, the higher emotions of love and reverence to God, and undermine the foundations of the higher ethical life.'[1] It is claimed that the Absolute must be a *concrete* universal. He holds also that a belief in difference as well as unity is necessary as a basis for our belief in immortality. But is this way of thinking sufficient if it is taken to mean simply that the universal consciousness must include differences within itself? Can such a conception of unity in difference, though it may be an improvement upon the belief in an abstract unity, even yet supply us with sufficient support for the ethical and religious life? It would seem that, for a truly ethical and religious relation, we must include within the bounds of our conception human personalities with the essential quality of will-power. The pundit appears to argue as if the distinction between our consciousness and that of God consisted mainly in the limitations of the former consciousness. This, however, would seem to imply that the human consciousness is not a permanent entity, but that with the removal of limitations—i.e. as it becomes less self-subsistent—

[1] *Philosophy of Brahmoism*, p. 177.

it will be merged in the one self-consciousness. But we are not content until we reach such a conception of the concrete Universal as will conserve human personality as an irretractable element in the Divine. Otherwise the worth—the permanent worth—of our life is diminished. Besides, such a conception as that which we are criticizing would relieve us of responsibility for ourselves and our deeds. There is a tendency in the pundit's writings to represent evil as relative, and to deprecate anxiety there anent as due simply to the narrowness of our vision. Sin thus becomes little more than a want of enlightenment. It is suggested that we would naturally overcome sin if we realized how 'detestable and repulsive it is.' But what of the unenlightened man? Must relief from sin wait entirely for his progress in enlightenment?

And what of the man who is enlightened—who knows the evil and *yet does* the evil? We cannot understand sin, we cannot take measures for the removal of sin unless we realize that its roots lie in the independent action of the human will. We cannot, however, arrive at this assertion of independence, whether for good or for evil, so long as we are content with the pantheistic attitude. And for the purposes of human life it does not matter, in the long run, whether this Pantheism is intellectually or emotionally conceived. If we are to escape from its consequences we need a fuller transformation of the pantheistic point of view. It is only through this fuller transformation that we can effectually escape from the influence of the pantheistic elements with their consequences in the way of subjectivity, sentimentalism, determinism and conservatism which we have noticed in the writings of Keshub Chunder Sen and which have hampered the otherwise healthy tendencies of his teaching.

CHAPTER XVI

TWO TEACHERS OF MODERN INDIA—THE SWĀMĪ VIVEKĀNANDA AND SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

The Conservatism of the Swāmī Vivekānanda

Turning aside from the definite tradition of Brahmo Samaj teaching, we may now direct our attention to two teachers who hold the most conspicuous place in the thought and regard of the India of to-day. The Swāmī Vivekānanda is indeed no longer amongst us, but he is represented by his books, and by the institutions which he inspired. Sir Rabindranath Tagore has recently attained to world-wide fame, but the width of his fame has by no means diminished the intensity of the influence which he at present exerts amongst his countrymen.

The Swāmī Vivekānanda came prominently into notice in connection with the Chicago 'Parliament of Religions,' to which he went with the express purpose of proclaiming to the world the teaching of his great master, Ram Kṛishṇa, regarding the unity of all religions. He spoke frequently at the meetings of the Parliament, and was the means of drawing the attention of the West in fuller measure than ever before to the teaching of the Vedānta, which teaching he professed to transmit to the present day in all its pristine purity.

His master, Ram Kṛishṇa, was originally a Vaishnava devotee. At the beginning of the last

quarter of the nineteenth century he established himself at Dakhineswar, a few miles from Calcutta. Here he became the founder of an influential religious movement. The influence which he wielded was enormous, and pilgrims from all parts of India sought instruction from him.

The central idea of his teaching is the unity of all religions. They are but different ways of reaching the same goal, or reflections in different colours of the same central light. His doctrine may be summed up in the following words of an ancient book: 'As different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, do the different paths which men through their different tendencies take, various though they appear, crooked and straight alike, all lead to Thee.' He not only tried to understand theoretically the teaching of the various religions, but also put their different methods into actual practice. He declared that he had lived in turn as a Hindu, as a Mohammedan, and as a Christian, and that, under each form of religious life, he had found God equally near. Therefore his watch-word was the destruction of all differences in the sphere of religion; but his method was negative on the whole; the unity towards which his thought moved was abstract rather than concrete, and his ideal was to leave behind all the differences rather than to merge them into a higher system of truth.

His influence has been continued and expanded by the labour of the most famous of his disciples, whose works, especially *Karma-Yoga*, *Rāja-Yoga*, *Bhakti-Yoga* and *Jñāna-Yoga*, are perhaps more widely read amongst the students of Bengal and, indeed, of the whole of India than any other religious books. The Ram Kṛishṇa mission has still its head-quarters at Belur, on the bank of the Hooghly

opposite to Dakhineswar, and here yearly festivals are held which attract thousands of people, many of them of the highest type intellectually and spiritually.

Vivekānanda's religious philosophy is frankly conservative and reactionary. He dissociated himself entirely from the more progressive tendencies of the Brahmo Samaj, and desired to draw his inspiration more definitely from the ancient sources. A contributor to a recent issue of a South Indian magazine—the *Vedānta Kesari*, published under the auspices of the Ram Kṛishṇa Mission in Madras, thus gives the substance of a conversation which the Swāmī had with him just before the former's departure for the Chicago Parliament. The Swāmī urged that Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayānand Sarasvatī, and other modern religious teachers, were simply feeble and misleading echoes, however disguised, of foreign religious ideas which were far below the lofty level and the rich products of India's own spiritual genius, and that their work was 'calculated to destroy her mission in the world as the spiritual leader and saviour of the human race. . . .' And the writer goes on to say: 'The Swāmī Vivekānanda, alone of all India's modern teachers and guides, under the impelling force of the inspiration he received from Śrī Ram Kṛishṇa, brought it frequently home to us that India had long ago taught the world, and even presented, in the maturity of their logical developments, all the forms and stages of the religious consciousness which were possible of enunciation and realization by the human mind, and that their harmony and unity of aim had also already been formulated in India and placed on an irrefragable basis of reasoned discussion and polemical triumph. . . .' Vivekānanda would probably have endorsed the spirit of this appreciation

of his doctrine. His teaching embodied essentially a return to the Vedānta, and to the Vedānta of the most abstract character. It could hardly be included within a study of *modern* Indian thought were it not for the vast influence which it is exerting at the present time. In other words, its modernity is one of influence rather than of content, and though the Swāmī is by no means unaware of the main tendencies of modern speculation in the broader philosophical and scientific world, he does not suffer himself to be influenced by these tendencies, but presents his teaching rather as an abstraction from them than as a synthesis of them. His point of view has a great attraction for those who are mystically inclined, and for those who are dissatisfied with present-day religious and social conditions; but we do not think that his influence will outlast its association with present reactionary tendencies in social and political life, and we believe that a thorough examination of his doctrines will show clearly that they cannot provide any basis for positive and constructive reform. The inspiration which his adherents believe they draw from his teaching, and which they express in genuine efforts for social advancement, is in reality drawn from theistic and Christian sources which these followers avail themselves of but which they do not openly acknowledge. It is still true that one cannot gather grapes of thorns. It is also still true that a fountain cannot at the same place send forth sweet water and bitter, and the bitter element has by no means been withdrawn from the fountain at which Vivekānanda allows us to drink. His view of the world is decidedly pessimistic. Whatever happiness there may be is balanced by pain. Good and evil are equally present, and there is no progress towards an ideal. If we wish to stop the evil we must stop the good

as well.[1] He claims, indeed, that he teaches neither optimism nor pessimism: 'The Vedāntic position does not say that the world is all evil or all good. It says that our evil is of no more value than our good, and our good of no more value than our evil.'[2] But, at times, he seems to feel the inadequacy of even this moderate estimate, and avails himself of more definitely pessimistic descriptions. He tells us in a later passage of the same book that 'the history of the world shows that evil is a continuously increasing quantity,'[3] and though he adds that good is also increasing, he explicitly refuses to allow that the proportions will ever be changed. So the conclusion would seem to be that increase of good can be secured only at the cost of increase of evil. And in view of our many desires and our few satisfactions he is constrained to describe this world as 'a hideous world.' 'At best it is the hell of Tantalus, and nothing else. Here we are with strong impulses and stronger ideas for sense enjoyments, and nothing outside to fill them. . . . Unhappiness is the fate of those who are content to live in this world, born as they are. A thousandfold unhappiness is the fate of those who dare to stand forth for truth and for higher things and dare to ask for something higher than mere enjoyable brutish existence here.'[4]

From this unmeaning, contradictory, unsatisfactory world we can do nothing better than escape. The only possible solution of the problems which beset us is the old Vedāntic confession that there is no solution. The world, with all its miseries, is a fact of experience at least, and we must just take it for granted. There can be no explanation, according to Vivekānanda; but 'the Vedānta can show

[1] Cf. *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 14.
[2] Ibid., p. 18.
[3] Ibid., p. 139.
[4] Ibid., p. 67.

a *way out*.' We need only 'cast a hurried glance at the particulars,'[1] and then leave them behind, recognizing, once for all, that we in our true essence are different from the world of experience, and that it need not concern us. All our troubles come from a craving for the continuance of our own finite individuality. Let us rather be indifferent to all the pain and sorrow of ourselves and others. 'Millions come and go every minute. Who cares? Why care for the joys and vicissitudes of this little world?'[2] Let us so depreciate this world as to think it unworthy of existence, and so let us call it *māyā*, delusion, unreality—and be free of it. Let us seek the One Self—the unity of the without and the within—Existence absolute, Bliss absolute, Knowledge absolute.

There can be but one Absolute, and we must find this Absolute behind the *prakriti* of the Sāṅkhyas, and the innumerable souls of their philosophy must of necessity be One. If you remove all difference from the soul, as the Sāṅkhyas do, then, on the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, there can be only one Soul. And when you have reached this unity of all, you will not ask for an explanation of the world of particular phenomena. Properly speaking there is nothing to be explained, so why attempt to explain it? Reality cannot possibly produce delusion, and delusion cannot be called an existence.[3]

We have here the old fallacy of explaining by refusing to explain—the method of referring all the problems of experience to the sphere of illusion and then saying that this general illusion, just because it is an illusion, requires no explanation. We have the same disregard as in the Vedānta of

[1] *Bhakti-Yoga*, p. 88.
[2] *Science and Philosophy of Religion*, p. 122.
[3] Cf. *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 111.

the consideration that illusion is a fact of experience, that if it were indeed true that illusion is nothing, even the wish to explain it could not arise. For if there is nothing to explain we cannot desire to explain it, and there is no point in rebuking us for attempting an impossible explanation.

In his *Bhakti-Yoga* Vivekānanda attempts to reconcile to this abstract unity those who are emotionally inclined. He wishes to direct the love which normally expends itself on particular objects towards the supreme object, or God, and so to increase the intensity of devotion that the Object remains no longer an Object but becomes a Subject—the Universal Subject, one with, or absorbent of, all particular subjects. An intense wave of feeling may be able to reach what reason or even intellectual intuition may not be able to secure. At the beginning of this book on *Bhakti-Yoga* he says: '*Bhakti-Yoga* is a genuine real search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing, and ending in Love. One single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom.'[1] This way of *bhakti* is one of the smoothest and easiest of paths. We begin where we are. We are not called upon to renounce anything in which we are interested. The transition from particular love to the universal love is one of gradual natural expansion.[2] In the religious sphere we should realize that there is no place for criticism of idol-worship. This is the necessary preliminary stage, and the end so shines through the transparency of the means that there might be said to be no idol-worship at all. In contrast to Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekānanda asserts that there is no polytheism in India, but that all the attributes of God, including omnipresence, are applied to the image by even the

[1] *Bhakti-Yoga*, p. 1. [2] Cf. op. cit., p. 72.

most ignorant worshipper.[1] We are rather inclined to think that this bold assertion is another instance of ' casting a hurried glance at the particular,' which Vivekānanda elsewhere advocates, and we fail to understand why, if this idol worship is inherently so elevated, the Swāmī himself should still call it the religion of the ignorant. But, be this as it may, Vivekānanda further argues that, even according to the most ordinary interpretation of it, idol-worship serves a useful religious purpose. The object which is given us for worship is, no doubt, illusory; but it is the worship itself which is important and by means of worship we shall recognize the illusory character of what we are worshipping. According to Vivekānanda it is a noteworthy fact that spiritual geniuses have always arisen in the environment of a religion which has paid great attention to ritual, and this shows how ritual may supply the necessary preliminary stages. The important matter is that we should not remain content with any of the limited objects of worship; we must realize that even the worship of a person is not the highest stage. At the same time, though not content with any lower form, we must be ready to accept the efficacy of all, and we must accept all religions as true. This, of course, it is easy to do if we keep our thoughts fixed on abstract unity and neglect all points of difference, remembering all the time that these various religions have their place within a system of *māyā*, which, just because it is *māyā*, may be the home of innumerable contradictions. To attempt to select the best out of the many varieties, or to resolve the contradictions, is an impossible and superfluous task. In order to enforce his objection to anything that savours of proselytism, Vivekānanda uses the illustration of

[1] Cf. *Chicago Addresses*, p. 44.

the seed placed in an environment of earth, air, and water, and asks pointedly whether the seed becomes the earth or the air or the water. Of course, the answer to a question put in this form is in the negative; but he forgets that here we have no vague indefiniteness. The seed has a dominant nature, and becomes a plant or tree of definite form. So the religious spirit, while certainly not abandoning itself weakly to any form with which it may come into casual contact, will yet select the form which has the greatest consonance with its own nature and which will allow it to develop on the lines of advance indicated by this nature. The needs of the religious spirit are themselves sufficient to introduce a criterion.

By letting our religious emotions play around the particular thing, and by transcending its boundaries and the boundaries in turn of all finite things, Vivekānanda tells us that we shall arrive at the goal of *bhakti*. In the end even the dualism of worship must be transcended. The worshipper, as such, cannot be regarded as having reached the final stage. He has still the dividing consciousness of something outside himself towards which he directs his worship. But in the final stage he will become absolutely merged in the object of his worship and will lose the sense of all personal identity and individuality. Thus, 'floating along smoothly in the current of our own nature,' we find this current bearing us to the open sea and become lost in God. Though in some passages *bhakti* is described in an almost anti-intellectual manner, yet, in the ultimate, the ideal of *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* are one and the same. 'There is really no difference between the higher knowledge and the higher bliss.'[1] There are occasional indications of

[1] *Bhakti-Yoga*, p. 95.

a lurking consciousness that in our flight to the abstract universal we are leaving behind qualities that are valuable. There is an uncomfortable suspicion that the so-called highest may not be very easily distinguishable from the lowest. Thus, we are told that two extremes meet—two kinds of men are able to do without worship—'the human brute who has no religion, and the *Paramahainsa*, who has risen beyond all the weaknesses of humanity and has transcended the limits of his own human nature. The "human brute" does not worship because of his ignorance, and the *jīvanmuktas* (free souls) do not worship because they have realized God in themselves.'[1] Of course, from the Vedāntic point of view, this difficulty of similarity of values would be got over by pointing out that all values belong to the realm of *māyā*, and that therefore reality can be reached only by undiscriminating denial of these values; but we have an uncomfortable feeling that it is illegitimate to talk of a *rise* from the state of brutish ignorance to that of the free soul, and then to talk of extremes meeting. Those who have risen above the plane of ignorance cannot meet with those who still occupy that plane unless there has been a descent proportional to the ascent. But the thought that when we reach the goal we may find that we have descended as far as we have risen is a somewhat depressing one.

There is a further consequence which we have noticed in connection with other applications of abstract Vedāntism. It is freely admitted that, for the purposes of describing absorption in the infinite, we should use categories belonging to the physical sphere. 'Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken

[1] *Bhakti-Yoga*, p. 43.

ocean of matter; and Advaitam (unity) is the necessary conclusion with my other counterpart, Soul.'[1] Is there not in this closely-drawn analogy a certain lowering of the dignity of the spiritual and a certain parsimony of conception? When we have realized all the wealth of our spiritual life and risen to the highest height of religious attainment, we find that all we have arrived at is the consciousness that we are but specks in the unbroken ocean of matter. It is not a prospect which brings much inspiration with it. This interpretation of the higher by the lower is a retrograde movement. It is an antiquated movement, as it moves in a direction contrary to that of the main current of modern thought. It is also an inconsistent movement, as it is out of harmony with the idealism which characterizes much of the Vedāntic teaching, even though it may be a consequence of the abstractions of that teaching. It is a case of idealism overreaching itself in its straining after abstraction and toppling over into materialism.

Sooner or later, in connection with Vivekānanda's writings, as in connection with other Vedāntic teaching, we have to ask the question whether this changeless Infinite can satisfy men who have to live in a world of time, space, and causality? Must we not take up a certain attitude to the world in which we live? Does this system we are considering enable us to take up a satisfactory attitude, and does it give us sufficient inspiration for the maintenance of it? Now, we have repeatedly shown that a doctrine of negation cannot consistently lead to any practical action whatsoever, and that if, in defiance of contradictions, a practical scheme is formulated, this is unsatisfactory in itself and produces no satisfactory result. We cannot say that the system

[1] *Chicago Addresses*, p 42.

of Vivekānanda is any exception to this general rule. Despite his admitted religious intensity, his appreciation at once of the value and the limits of scientific procedure, and his resolute opposition to all materialistic aims, we cannot feel that he has given us a body of teaching which is of much use for the purification and uplifting of the lives we have to live both as individuals and in society. He himself admits the necessity of some reconciliation with ordinary experience, and in fact deals with such a reconciliation in one of his best-known books—*Karma-Yoga*. There are two ways in which we may obtain release—negative and positive. 'The negative way is the most difficult. It is only possible to the men of the very highest exceptional minds and gigantic wills. . . . But such people are very rare; the vast majority of mankind chooses the positive way, making use of all the bondages to break through these bondages. This also is a kind of giving up, only it is done slowly and gradually, by knowing things, enjoying things, and thus obtaining experiences, and knowing the nature of things until the mind lets them all go at last and becomes unattached.'[1] The teaching seems to be that by constant activity we shall come to lose desire for any activity, by blowing the bubble bigger and bigger we shall cause it to burst and shall then discover that it is only a bubble.

We must, in the first place, give up all thought of improving the world. We have already considered its unsatisfactory and unmeaning character. Good and evil are equally mixed, and good will never gain the victory over the evil. For us the world is simply a tantalizing series of failures to provide satisfaction. The process of the universe is a cyclic one. 'System after system is evolved out of chaos,

[1] *Karma-Yoga*, p. 134.

made to run for a time, and again destroyed.'[1] There is no ideal, even though the thought of one may be 'a very good motive power to inspire and uplift the ignorant.'[2] According to the interpretation of Vivekānanda's teaching given in the journal from which I have already quoted (the *Vedānta Kesari*), the leading reformers appear to him to be 'perplexing and perplexed personalities . . . who have mercilessly striven to disturb the foundations of Indian social and moral life.' And the disturbance is so uncalled-for, because, according to this same exceedingly favourable critic, social service and philanthropy constitute, in Vivekānanda's happy phrase, 'mere social scavengering,' and 'are brought into existence, as they are in the new Indian life of to-day, by purely secular motives and national aspiration.' Thus, it would appear that religion should recognize the hopelessness of social reformation and should not soil her garments with the dust of the conflict. Vivekānanda uses a very homely illustration to enforce his meaning. He recalls the story of the poor man who was given a ghost as a bondservant, the only condition being that the ghost must be kept fully occupied, otherwise he would inevitably kill his master. The poor man racked his brains to think of sufficiently lengthy occupations, but the ghost finished all his tasks with most disconcerting celerity. At last the poor employer gave the ghostly slave a dog's tail to straighten out, and this task was never finished, because, as soon as the slave had finished the straightening process, the tail immediately curled up again. Now the world is like this dog's tail. We may try to straighten out its confusions as much as we please, but it will never remain straight. Like the dog's tail it will immediately become crooked, and all our

[1] *Chicago Addresses*, p. 24. [2] *Karma-Yoga*, p. 108.

efforts will be discovered to be futile. 'Do not try to patch up this world,' says Vivekānanda in another passage. 'Nothing will cure this world: go beyond it.'

The idea that we can do good to the world is but a subtle form of pride and selfishness. Our efforts are both impossible and unnecessary. They are impossible, because, in so far as we act in this world of time and space and causality, we are under the rule of *karma*, which secures that all previous impressions made upon us are carried forward through the medium of a subtle body and determine our action. We cannot, therefore, direct ourselves contrary to the flow of the current. Our efforts are also superfluous. The world does not *need* our help; all will come right (so far as we can speak of right at all in connection with such an unmeaning confusion as the world) without our troubling ourselves. 'We may all be perfectly sure that it (the world) will go on beautifully well without us, and need not bother our heads wishing to help it.'[1] And again: 'No permanent or everlasting good can be done to the world.'[2] It is simply weakness to think that I can do good to another or that any one else is dependent on me.[3]

The idea of duty is on a comparatively low plane and is a phase of our bondage. 'Duty becomes a disease with us, drags us ever forward. It catches hold of us and makes our life miserable. It is the bane of human life.' It is an element of compulsion and continues our attachment to the world.[4] Similarly, the idea of sin is an insult to human nature, and the consciousness of it is a source of weakness. At the most what we call sin is only error. 'The Vedānta recognizes no sin: it recognizes error.'

[1] *Karma-Yoga*, p. 91.
[2] Ibid., p. 156.
[3] Cf. p. 117.
[4] Cf. p. 145.

In fact it is hardly even error, as good and evil are but the obverse and reverse of the coin. Over and over again Vivekānanda warns us in the most impassioned language against the disrespect to human nature which is involved in the idea of sin: 'The worst lie that you ever told yourself is that you were born a sinner or a wicked man.' 'Foolishness, wickedness, downright rascality to say that you are sinners.' [1] And again: 'Ye are divinities on earth. Sinners? It is a sin (*sic*) to call a man so. It is a standing libel on human nature.' [2] We should remember rather that 'every soul is destined to be perfect, and that every being will in the end attain the state of her perfection,' [3] and we should anticipate that perfection by claiming it now as our rightful heritage. If we think that we are free from imperfection, we *are* free.

Vivekānanda points out that 'God causes his sun to shine on saints and sinners alike,' and the inference seems to be, not as in the parallel New Testament case, merely that we should show mercy to the sinner, but that in the universality of the divine reality there is no place for sin. He argues that it is impossible for us to hate the sin without hating the sinner,[4] and, as it would be wrong to hate the sinner, the inference here again seems to be that we should not hate the sin, or, more generally, that there is really no sin to hate.

It would seem as if these doctrines of the unreality of sin, the bondage of duty, and the futility of social endeavour would be utterly subversive of morality, and destructive of any impulse towards unselfish actions. Indeed, it must be confessed that it is not from such doctrines that the members of the Ram Kṛishṇa Mission draw the inspiration for the

[1] *Jñāna-Yoga*, pp. 53 and 135.
[2] *Chicago Addresses*, p. 33.
[3] *Bhakti-Yoga*, p. 25.
[4] Cf. *Karma-Yoga*, p. 102.

social work for which they have often been nobly distinguished. But, in justice to Vivekānanda, it must also be pointed out that he allowed a certain relative distinction between good and evil actions and between selfish and unselfish actions. In the *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 57, he says, 'Though evil and good are both conditioned manifestations of the soul, yet evil is the most external coating, and good is the nearer coating of the real man, the self.' There would seem to be here an admission that good is nearer to the nature of reality than evil, and that, if we wish to reach reality, we must give up evil *before* we give up good. The reason underlying this is, no doubt, that good actions are usually directed towards more general aims than evil actions, and so have a greater liberating influence upon the soul. Similarly, we must do good to others, not for the sake of others, but for our own sake. As we have already seen, we cannot really benefit others, but in attempting to benefit them we may benefit ourselves. Unselfishness, according to this doctrine, would assume the form of an inverted spiritual selfishness, and it is difficult to see how in such a case it can really fulfil the lower function (which is all that Vivekānanda assigns to it) of a moral gymnastic, specially suitable for the liberation of the soul from selfishness. Yet this is all that the so-called unselfish actions seem to be good for, and in order that they may have even this limited value, they must be done with an utter absence of motive. We must not think of anything beyond, otherwise we are still in the bondage of self. Vivekānanda here makes the most unjustifiable assumption that any motive whatsoever must necessarily be a selfish motive, and that, if we take results into consideration at all, they must be results in the direction of our own advantage. He also passes lightly over the

psychological difficulty of conceiving voluntary actions as performed without a motive. He thinks that he deals sufficiently with this difficulty by saying that 'the less passion there is the better we work. The calmer we are the better for us, and the more the amount of work that we do.'[1] This may be, but the conclusion which he bases upon it is altogether untrustworthy. He makes the mistake of arguing from the deleterious effects of impulsive and narrow passion, not only to the damaging character of passion, but also to the necessity of dispensing with motive altogether. It seems impossible for him to conceive of calm, deliberate working for an end, but it is equally impossible for us to conceive of action which is not controlled by some thought of the reasonableness of the action in its ultimate result, or to discriminate between good and bad actions without introducing the idea of end.

The only escape from the difficulty is to conceive of action as good in itself utterly irrespective of its direction, and Vivekānanda seems inclined to adopt this method of escape, regardless of its non-ethical implications. At times he takes up the position that all action is good, whatever its particular object may be. He seems to make a particular application of the general maxim in the *Rāja-Yoga* that 'the best guide in life is strength.' Even if a particular action is admittedly evil, it is better to do it than to do nothing. 'It is better to tell a lie . . . than to be a log of wood.'[2] If we continue acting along any line, this action will develop into a means of liberation. If, e.g., we are inclined to resist, we may continue to resist, for thus we shall learn non-resistance. He applies to this case once more his principle that 'in all matters the two extremes are alike'—a defiance of the laws of con-

[1] *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 196. [2] *Karma-Yoga*, p. 23.

tradiction which we find it difficult to accept. 'When you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come.' And, more generally, 'Plunge into the world, and when you have suffered and enjoyed all that is in it, then will calmness and renunciation come. So fulfil your desire for power and everything else, and, after you have fulfilled the desire, will come the time when you will know that they are all very little things.'[1]

Thus emphasis is laid upon undiscriminating, unmotived energy. It is by the mere exercise of strength that we shall attain liberation. It is a strange doctrine, both in this Eastern form and in the approaches towards it which certain developments of recent Western philosophy have indicated. It is impossible to withhold a certain degree of admiration for this energetic counsel, especially when Vivekānanda spiritualizes it into the general advice given in the *Raja-Yoga*: 'In religion, as in everything else, discard everything that weakens you; you have nothing to do with it.' There is a considerable attraction in the contempt expressed for the man 'who is too dull even to do something wicked.' But, at the same time, it is psychologically impossible for us to attain the end of calm and renunciation by this method. It is no doubt true that desire may exhaust itself by bringing satiety, but is it not the more general teaching of Vivekānanda that desire, if indulged in, simply breeds new binding desires? Is it not his higher teaching that we should rely upon restraint of desires rather than upon the expulsion of them through repeated experiences of satiety? We cannot argue both that we should fulfil all desires and that we should restrain all desires. Further, this doctrine of unrestrained energy is inconsistent with Vivekānanda's

[1] *Karma-Yoga*, p. 25.

limited distinction between good and evil action. If good action is to be preferred to evil action because the latter binds us more closely to unreality, how is it possible to argue that by continuing in evil actions (which continuance is included in the fulfilling of all desires), we shall attain to liberation ? Are not these evil actions more likely to bind us to the illusion from which we seek to escape ? Surely the transformation which brings freedom to the soul will consist in resolute opposition to certain desires rather than in simply carrying these onwards. Surely there is a contradiction between this doctrine and Vivekānanda's central idea that by lofty disregard of consequences we shall learn to despise the world and so shall attain to the freedom to which the ways of knowledge and of *bhakti* are designed to lead us. In seeking to get rid of the difficulties contained in the conception of unmotived action Vivekānanda has fallen into still greater difficulties. He has lost the moderate distinction between good and evil action which he was previously willing to admit, and has made it impossible to attain even the negative result upon which, after all, his main emphasis falls. His highest ideal is one of renunciation, by the continual practice of which we shall lose our sense of individuality, and, forgetting that we are men, become aware that we are divine. All maintenance of self is selfishness, and we reach the goal and get beyond all weakness and fear only when we discover that the universal is the only real individual.

Vivekānanda, however, hastens to assure us that in thus abandoning ourselves to the Infinite we do not divest ourselves of moral responsibility. 'Nothing makes us so moral as this idea of Monism. Nothing makes us work so well at our best and highest as when all the responsibility is thrown upon

us. I am responsible for my fate, I am the bringer of good unto myself. I am the bringer of evil. I am the Pure and Blessed One.'[1] It is difficult to understand the idea of responsibility which is here involved. Responsibility seems to disappear in a nebulous identification of ourselves with the Divine. We need not argue that the usual meaning of responsibility is that it is constituted by the duty laid upon us of carrying out the behest of a superior. Even if we grant the identification of our highest self with the Supreme, we must still remember that responsibility has meaning only in reference to a world in which action is rationally effective and in reference to the carrying out of a purpose. Even God cannot be responsible except in relation to the *carrying out of His own purposes*. The denial of a Divine purpose in reference to the world carries with it also the denial of Divine responsibility, and, therefore, our identification with the Divine leads to an abandonment also of our responsibility and an absorption into the non-qualitative nature of God, to reach whom we must leave behind the good and the evil alike.

In this latest rehabilitation of the Vedānta philosophy we cannot discover that any advance has been made upon its main tendencies. This is a matter of great importance in view of the present-day influence of Vivekānanda's teaching. In conversation with educated Indians one can trace his thoughts and almost his very language. And we have to admit that his influence does not make for true optimism, religious conviction, ethical decisiveness, or healthy progress. The inspiration in these directions which is moving modern India comes from other sources. Vivekānanda's highest ideas detach us from interest in the world of our experi-

[1] *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 192.

ence. They compel us to choose between the reality of God and the illusion of the phenomenal world. This world is still pessimistically regarded, and yet, it is admitted that we have to live and act within it. But for such life and action the provision made is inadequate. Our action is paralysed by the hopelessness of improvement and by our own want of freedom. All we can do is to realize this hopelessness and then leave the problems of life as insoluble. The ethical earnestness and spiritual intensity of Vivekānanda are overshadowed and overwhelmed by his metaphysical negations. 'The Absolute, or Infinite,' he says, 'is trying to express itself in the Finite, but there will come a time when it will find that it is impossible, and that it will have to beat a retreat, and this beating a retreat is the real beginning of religion.'[1] If this is our conception of God, our life will also end in *beating a retreat*, and the refrain will be one of sadness. But the followers of Vivekānanda are building better than he knew, or perhaps better than they themselves know, and it may be that in their genuine efforts after social improvement they will find that the beginnings of religion are not in retreat but in advance, and they will reach a faith, not in an Absolute whose failures we have reluctantly to follow, but in an Almighty God who goeth with us to the conflict and who will ultimately lead us to victory.

[1] *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 16.

CHAPTER XVII

TWO TEACHERS OF MODERN INDIA—*continued*

The Coming of the Dawn in the Teaching of Sir Rabindranath Tagore

If the Swāmī Vivekānanda represents a certain conservative tendency in modern Indian thought, Sir Rabindranath Tagore may be regarded as embodying in his teaching elements which make for progress. Yet with him the dawn does not come quickly, neither does progress consist in abrupt transition from an old world of thought to a new. He is not a reactionary; he is much in sympathy with the conservative teacher whose work we have just been considering, and, like his own predecessors in the Brahmo community to which he belongs, he attaches great value to traditional thought inheritance. Thus, the saying that he is 'to a large extent a member of a Western religious world,' is true only to a limited extent. It is true, indeed, that the light came to him not by Eastern windows only. He opened his soul to the ideas of the West, and especially from Christianity has he borrowed ideas the influence of which upon his whole trend of thought has not always been acknowledged. The origin of these ideas has often been too much concealed by their Eastern dress, and, although truth is one and inhabits no particular clime, yet absence of indication here has led to consequences prejudicial to the development of truth itself. The ideas of Sir Rabindranath,

like the ideas of so many thinkers of modern India, have, for want of frank indication of their origin, been assigned to Indian sources, and this has led his adherents mistakenly to expect that they will be able to draw from the same source many other ideas suitable for application to modern conditions of life and impulsive towards individual and social progress. They are thus blinded to the necessity of that radical transformation of the fundamental metaphysical and religious thought of India which will be necessary if they are to be saved from disappointment. The admirers of Sir Rabindranath in the West, again, seem also in many cases to be misled into minimizing the vast importance of the contribution which Christianity has made to the thought of modern India, and to be in danger of failing to realize their responsibility in reference to the continuance and enlargement of that contribution. Our previous study will have revealed to us the greatness of India's need for a more vivifying conception of religion than her own sacred tradition can supply. The writings of Sir Rabindranath are evidence of how that need is being met by the sons of India herself, but the need would have been met still more fully if he had pointed a little more frequently to the sources of his inspiration and had directed others, in language which they could not fail to understand, towards the same fountain.

Yet, though the influence of non-Indian religious thought is unmistakable, and the ideas which he has derived from the philosophical, scientific, ethical, and even poetical thought of the West appear repeatedly on his pages, increasing his emphasis, e.g., upon activity and personality, impressing upon him the necessity of a metaphysical basis for morality, helping him to realize that the crown of life is ultimately in affirmation rather than in

negation, and that deep and abiding sources of joy are to be found in the communion of the free spirit with the eternal love of God, manifested in and through the actual experiences of our every day; though Sir Rabindranath is both Eastern and Western, he is more Eastern than Western, and it would be a mistake to think that because he sits somewhat loose to any particular Indian system of doctrine or of life the traditional element in his teaching is anything less than dominating. It may be true, as Mr. Leslie Johnston says, that he had 'no coherent body of theology and religious practice behind him,'[1] or, as Pundit S. N. Tattvabhushan says, that he was led by the workings of his own soul rather than by the inspiration of any great teacher such as his father, the Maharshi, or Keshub Chunder Sen[2]; but we must not be misled by such statements as these into minimizing the influence upon him of the past intellectual and religious history of India. He may not have followed any particular religious teacher amongst the Brahmos, but this may have been because his inheritance was wider than Brahmoism. In certain aspects indeed he is hardly so revolutionary as Brahmoism in general. As regards his relations to the land of his birth he might be said to unite two streams—the Brahmo tradition and the orthodox tradition—without surrendering himself altogether to the force of either current.

He himself readily acknowledges his debt to the past of his own race, country, and family. In the Preface to *Sādhanā* he speaks reverently of the influence of his father upon him, and tells how he was brought up in a family where the texts of the Upanishads were used daily in family worship. The ancient scriptures of his country are not for

[1] Cf. *Quarterly Review*, January 1914.
[2] Cf. *Philosophy of Brahmoism*, p. 288

him matters of antiquarian interest only. 'The verses of the Upanishads,' he says, 'and the teachings of Buddha have ever been things of the spirit, and therefore endowed with boundless vital growth.' His avowed aim is to give to Western readers 'an opportunity of coming into touch with the ancient spirit of India as revealed in our sacred texts and manifested in the life of to-day' (Preface to *Sādhanā*, pp. vii. viii).

What specially interests us here is to show how far the ancient spirit of India—especially in its pantheistic aspects—moulds the thought of this modern teacher; how he draws from this inheritance the best that is in it, but also to a large extent modifies and transforms it, leaving behind much that is less desirable; and how, finally, he is prevented by traditional pantheistic influence from giving to his characteristic thoughts the completeness they might otherwise have had.

The influence on him of the concrete and positive Pantheism of India is greater than that of the abstract phase. At times, indeed, he shows a certain negative tendency, but it is a negative tendency which emphasizes all that is good in negation. It is a transformation of ordinary values in the interests of spirituality, and is not a denial of all values. He tries to make men understand the worthlessness of their ordinary possessions, but does not teach that everything in ordinary experience is worthless. He wishes, indeed, that only a little be left of him, but the little that is left must be sufficient to link every part of his being with God.[1] Occasionally, indeed, there is evidence of a strain of passivity, such as is the usual accompaniment of negative Pantheism, and the individual seems to be lost in the immensity of the All. But, on the

[1] Cf. *Gitanjali*, p. 34.

whole, the trend of his teaching is in the active and positive direction. He would inspire us with courage to 'knock at every open door.' When he emphasizes the idea that the end we are to aim at is union with God he is careful also to point out that this union is not to be reached by destroying all differences, but rather by conserving those that have worth in a fullness of communion with the Divine.

The *All* for Sir Rabindranath is the concrete, and not the abstract universal. Expression in the particular is a reality, and not merely an appearance. 'The universal,' he says, 'is ever seeking its consummation in the unique,' and this phrase marks a strong contrast between his teaching and that of the arch-traditionalist Vivekānanda, who thinks that this striving of the Absolute to express itself in the finite is doomed to hopeless failure, and that 'there will come a time when the Absolute will find that it is impossible and have to beat a retreat.'[1] Sir Rabindranath explicitly dissociates himself from the negative aspect of thought which the quotation from Vivekānanda indicates. He holds strongly that the pervading tendency of Indian thought is positive, and that its highest endeavour is to affirm the presence of the Infinite in all things. We have but to open our eyes to the nature that is around us and we shall find everywhere an object of worship, and, if we will but view all these objects in their ultimate unity, rising beyond law to the Being of whose character law is the expression, we shall reach the Infinite. From the bosom of the Infinite our lives have come, but we have left our resting-place and our home. Our hands are filled with the merchandise of the markets of the world, and with getting and spending we have laid waste our souls. Or, to

[1] Vivekānanda, *Jñāna-Yoga*, p. 16.

vary the metaphor, we have tried to walk on ' the single rope of humanity ' in the tenuous life of individuality. So we have been straining ever to keep our balance, and, abandoning ourselves to the necessity of incessant movement, we have missed the secret of the repose of nature. We have forgotten the breadth of our life and its infinitely multiplied and varied connection with the All. We have forgotten, as the *Gitanjali* puts it in still another figure, that ' the same stream of life which runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measure ' [1]

Sir Rabindranath is almost Wordsworthian in his attitude to natural beauty, in his appreciation of details, and his prayer that the doors of his senses may never be shut. But it is of his debt to Eastern tradition that he is more fully aware. He points out the difference between Greek and Indian civilization. The former was ' nurtured within city walls,' and the walls became typical of its character. Indian civilization, on the other hand, found its natural home in forests, near to nature, surrounded by her vast life. For this reason, there was in India no thought of an antagonism between man and nature, no insatiable desire on the part of man to wrest treasures from nature, or, more prosaically, to detach certain portions of land and make them his very own by building a wall round them. We must break down these walls and abandon the whole mental attitude which they signify if we are to reach oneness with Nature and the Universal. This idea is beautifully expressed in *Gitanjali*, p. 29 : ' I am ever busy building this wall all around, and, as this wall goes up into the sky day by day, I lose sight of my true being in its dark shadow.' We must break down this wall in which we take so much

[1] Page 69.

pride and which we keep in such good repair. We must breathe the air of a nature which is Divine. The same idea of the necessity of freeing the spirit from artificial restraints is expressed in the *Gitanjali* under the figures of sweeping away tinsel or breaking through a chain.[1]

At the same time, we should be careful not to allow ourselves to degenerate into mere naturalism and materialism. We must not so abandon ourselves to the particularizing worship of the various objects in nature as to forget the central spiritual unity. We 'must clearly realize some central truth which will give an outlook over the widest possible field.'[2] The *All* is possessed when we find the *One*, and the One may be discovered if we follow the teaching of the Upanishads and descend to the depths of the human soul. And in this region where the divine and human meet we shall discover, not by reasoning or demonstration, but by a direct flash of intuition, 'the bridge leading to the immortal being.'

Thus, in striving towards a full realization of the capacities of its nature, the soul takes two directions —outward and inward. It may lay stress upon being or upon becoming, upon essence or upon manifestation. The chief contribution which Sir Rabindranath makes to the development of Indian thought is his union of those two modes of thinking, his constant insistence that a consciousness of the spirituality of the universe must not be allowed to deprive the universe of meaning. If the Western thinker has been mistaken in directing his attention too exclusively outwards, the Eastern thinker, on the other hand, has occupied himself too exclusively with the inward aspect of reality. He has despised the 'open field of the exercise of power' and 'the

[1] Pages 29, 31. [2] *Sādhanā*, p. 27.

world of extension.' Of himself and his countrymen Sir Rabindranath says, 'We would realize Brahma in meditation only in his aspect of completeness; we have determined not to see him in the commerce of the universe in his aspect of evolution. That is why in our seekers we so often find the intoxication of the spirit and its consequent degradation. Their faith would acknowledge no bondage of law, their imagination soars unrestricted, their conduct disdains to offer any explanation to reason. Their intellect, in its vain attempts to see Brahma inseparable from his creation, works itself stone-dry, and their heart, seeking to confine him within its own outpourings, swoons in a drunken ecstasy of emotion. They have not even kept within reach of any standard whereby they can measure the loss of strength and character which manhood sustains by thus ignoring the bonds of law and the claims of action in the external universe' (*Sādhanā*, 127).

We could hardly desire a more vigorous protest than this against the destructive tendencies inherent in traditional Indian philosophy, which manifest themselves in the degradation of its pure spirituality to the level of non-ethical emotionalism and quietism. It is part of Sir Rabindranath's greatness that he is so discriminating in regard to the exact quality of his debt to the thought of his own land. He takes up a resolute attitude in regard to the conception of *māyā*. He will have none of it as an explanation of the miseries and confusions of human thought and life. For him it is only a description, or at most a hint, that nothing can really exist apart from God. He will not for a moment agree to the depreciation of the manifestations of God which is usually involved in the conception. 'Who so steeped in untruth as to dare to call all this untrue —this great world of men, this civilization of

expanding humanity, this eternal effort of man? . . . He who can think of this immensity of achievement as an immense fraud, can he truly believe in God, who is the truth?' (*Sādhanā*, 130).

Two consequences, with effect upon the religious life, emerge from this protest. If the world is not unmeaning, it is unmeaning to leave it behind. Mere renunciation or sacrifice for its own sake is valueless. Renunciation ought to mean only the giving up of the lower for the sake of the higher, of the narrower for the sake of the wider. It is a readjustment of values, a fuller realization than in the unawakened state of the capabilities of the soul, and not a destruction of these capabilities. Neither can we find any justification for withdrawal from the ordinary life of humanity. It is the utmost foolishness to sacrifice 'the grand self-expression of humanity' for 'incessant self-consecration.' 'Who is there that thinks this secluded communion the highest form of religion?' (*Sādhanā*, 129).

The other consequence is that we find, almost for the first time in Indian philosophy, a clear emphasis upon activity as the highest form of religious expression. It is true that there are traces in the Upanishads of a regard for the conception of divine activity, but the prevailing Indian tendency is to view the God who manifests Himself in the universe as the penultimate and not the ultimate form of the Divine, and the very conception of Him as a more or less weak concession to human poverty of religious expression. The consequence of this, again, is that human activity can at best be only a means and can have no permanent meaning or value. In the writings of Vivekānanda activity is chiefly valued because it provided a means for the realization of the worthlessness of the world. But with Sir Rabindranath human activity is a co-operation with God.

It is no doubt also a means of moral purification, for he tells us that it is when the soul 'sleeps in stagnation' that its enemies gain overmastering strength. But the highest motive for human activity is that God has worked and is working. 'It is not enough that He should alone work to relieve our work, but He should give us the desire and the strength to work with Him in His activity and in the exercise of His goodness' (*Sādhanā*, 132). Occasionally, this conception of the Divine working is expressed in such an excessively pantheistic manner (as e.g. in the phrase 'the irresistible current of Thy universal energy') as to imply a passive yielding to an overwhelming world-might. But, on the whole, the working of God is used as a metaphysical basis for the construction of a conception of the worth of human activity and in order to supply a religious motive for the same. In work we find at once the reality of our own souls and a means of communion with God. 'Where can I meet Thee unless in my home made Thine? Where can I join Thee unless in this my work transformed into Thy work? If I leave my home, I shall not reach Thy home; if I cease my work, I can never join in Thy work' (*Sādhanā*, 163). The idea that, in order to share in the divine working, we need not leave our ordinary occupations, is emphasized and given more definitely social reference in the well-known passage in *Gitanjali*, ii: 'Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads. . . . Open thine eyes and see thy God is not before thee. He is where the tiller is tilling the hard ground and where the path-maker is breaking stones. He is with them in sun and shower, and His garment is covered with dust. Put off thy holy mantle, and even like Him come down on the dusty soil.' It is noteworthy, as showing how thought in India is breaking away from the

older conceptions, that in the recent frequent references to Sir Rabindranath's work, this has been amongst the passages most frequently quoted by his own countrymen.

An idea closely connected with the foregoing, but, at the same time, one which marks a great advance upon previous Indian thought, is that the working of God is full of purpose. This conception presents a very decided contrast to the teaching of the other great modern leader of religious thought —Vivekānanda. For him the ideal is a conception to be treated with scorn, and is useful only to inspire the ignorant to a semblance of morality. But for Sir Rabindranath the working of God is a true revelation of His purpose. Especially in the history of humanity is His will revealed. The progress of humanity is as the movement of a triumphal car, and God is the charioteer directing it to its goal. Man fulfils his duty in answering the call to join in this triumphal progress. And, seeing that this onward march of the purposes of God is one that may be described in moral terms, we get here at last what we have long been searching for in vain in Indian philosophy, viz. a metaphysical and religious basis for morality. It is now allowed that moral predicates may be attributed to God and may become a description of His working. In the conception of the good we recognize 'an inner kinship' with God. The divine activity is no longer aimless, but conforms to the laws of the nature of God, and these laws furnish a basis for morality. The moral life thus becomes the universal life. To live in perfect goodness is to realize one's life in the All, and this, according to Sir Rabindranath, was the heavenly vision which illuminated the words and thoughts and deeds of the Christ. Thus goodness becomes distinguished from evil in that the former is infinitely more real

than the latter. We have passed far beyond the doctrine of Vivekānanda, according to which good and evil are but the obverse and reverse of the same coin. We are no longer asked to admit that the quantities of good and evil are equal, and that every increase of good means a corresponding increase of evil. We are no longer put off with Vivekānanda's grudging concession that good may be 'a coating' slightly nearer to reality than evil. The ideal is more than a merely temporary conception useful for the restraint of the mentally childish. We no longer look upon unrestrained activity as in itself a means of liberation. On the contrary, Sir Rabindranath tells us, as Vivekānanda, in consistency, ought also to have told us, that 'where there is madness of licence, the soul ceases to be free' (*Sādhanā*, 119). Duty is not to be regarded as the bondage of the slave. On the contrary, it is the law and harmony of the universe, and in the performance of it alone can we win peace and freedom for our souls. 'The bass and treble strings of our duty are only bonds so long as we cannot maintain them steadfastly attuned according to the law of truth' (*Sādhanā*, 128).

This strongly ethical conception of the universe and of human activity in relation to it, necessitates a still further advance upon the prevalent Indian ideas of human freedom. For the first time in Indian philosophical and religious thought freedom wins a satisfactory metaphysical basis, and the teaching of Sir Rabindranath in this relation marks a definite breach with the tradition he has inherited and entitles him to be called the herald of the coming of the dawn. He recognizes that co-operation and communion are unintelligible conceptions unless they involve two factors both of which are permanently valuable. Determinism in the temporal action of the individual and his final absorption in

the Universal are alike alien to the main tendency of Sir Rabindranath's teaching. Human freedom is a gift from God. It is an outcome of the divine joy, that joy which we begin to understand when we rise above conceptions of mere law and utility, when, e.g., a flower ceases to be for us only a means to the fruit, and becomes a revelation of beauty and a mirror for the mind of God. This conception of joy is illuminative of the whole question. Joy, in order to be fully realized, involves duality: when we rejoice we wish others to share our joy, and if no friends are present with us, we, as it were, tell our joy to a second self. It is the same with God, and thus we see that the outcome of the divine joy is the divine love.

Again, love can persist only as it secures reciprocity, i.e. in communion with a will which is free to return an answer of love: 'Thy love for me still waits for my love' (*Gitanjali*, 32). In order to procure such an answering love God imposes limitations upon Himself. He restrains Himself from interference with the will of man and refuses to rob him of the fullness of his personality. This personality must be allowed to continue and expand, and the increase of it will constitute an ever more complete answer to the love of God. Though, as we have seen, Sir Rabindranath use phrases, such as 'merging in the Universal,' which have a definitely pantheistic colouring, he does not fall into Vivekānanda's fallacy of thinking that the individual self must always be the selfish self, and that, therefore, in order to get rid of selfishness, this individual self must altogether be abandoned. He does not urge the annihilation of anything that is of value in personality. It is only the 'pride of personality' that we must leave behind, for this 'will be a curse if we cannot give it up in love' (*Sādhanā*, 91). We

have only to see that we do not fret against circumstances, that the current of our life does not break through the banks and lose itself in low-lying marshes. It must flow clear and strong to the awaiting sea of the Divine love. Nothing of value, we repeat, according to the teaching of Sir Rabindranath, is to be left behind. At the very least we must retain sufficient strength to surrender our strength to the will of God (cf. *Gitanjali*, 36). Our closer union with God means increase in the fullness of our own personality: 'Man's deepest joy is in growing greater and greater by more and more union with the All'; and, conversely, 'the more vigorous our individuality, the more does it widen towards the universal' (59, 61). And in our fullness of individual life and strength we shall enter into the joy of God, we shall hear the song of the Eternal, and 'translate back the singing into the original joy.' If there is pain in our lives, we shall realize that it is but a means to our perfecting, and shall thus understand that it is the symbol of the possibility of joy.

The religious philosophy of Sir Rabindranath thus ends in a note of resolute optimism. 'Pain is not a fixture in life,' and the essence of evil is impermanence. It would seem ungracious to object to this strengthening of the optimistic elements in our view of life, especially at the end of a disquisition on Pantheism in which we have discovered an unmistakable tendency towards pessimism and have on that account regarded Pantheism as an unsatisfactory metaphysical position. We certainly do not object to the optimism of the teaching we are now considering. On the contrary, we regard this optimism as one of the signs of the return of vitality to Indian thought. We thoroughly agree with the dictum of Sir Rabindranath that 'pessimism is a form

of dipsomania, disdaining healthy nourishment,' and that the mere fact of our continuing in existence proves that existence is worthy of continuance (cf. *Sādhanā*, p. 53). But, at the same time, we cannot help an uncomfortable feeling that the optimism here is a little too facile, that it is in danger of approaching rather too closely that superficial kind of optimism which passes so readily into pessimism when confronted with the tragedies and the deeper seriousness of life. There are undoubtedly genuinely optimistic elements in Sir Rabindranath's teaching, and we connect these elements closely with the non-pantheistic aspects of his doctrine—with his emphasis upon the revealing character of morality, upon the value of personality, and of the ordinary life of action. But we feel at the same time that he has not, in the building of his system as a whole, gone down to the bed-rock foundation of these non-pantheistic conceptions. Sometimes it would seem as if he were content with the shifting sand of merely pantheistic speculation. There is thus a certain amount of instability about the whole edifice. It is a magnificent palace of thought and beauty which he has erected, but sometimes we feel as if we would prefer to dwell in the open rather than in a building whose foundations are, in part, insufficiently secured.

In plain language, our criticism is that our author has not sufficiently considered the implications of the Divine gift of freedom to man. This freedom, if the conception of it is to enable us to deal with the actual facts of life, must be a real freedom. In other words, it must be a freedom to do evil as well as to do good, and this evil, again, must be distinctly recognized as more than error and as more than temporary. Sir Rabindranath no doubt admits the existence of sin and the painful consciousness of it.

He quotes the prayer with earnest sympathy, 'Father, completely sweep away all my sins,' and, again, he describes sin as 'the blurring of truth which clouds the purity of our consciousness' (*Sādhanā*, 38), and as the 'innermost barrier which keeps us apart from God.' By sin our vision of the truth is obstructed—but is this all? We ask once more the question whether it is not possible to have a vision of the truth and yet to refuse to follow the truth? And, again, we may become *hardened* into a depraved habit of mind which, though not original, may yet be inseparable in so far as our own unaided efforts to remove it are concerned. Sinfulness may not be our nature, but it may be our second nature. It seems to us that Sir Rabindranath's philosophy of religion overlooks these possibilities, overlooks the fact that even God has to pay a price for the creation of human freedom. This price consists in taking the risk that man may abuse his freedom and may find himself helpless in the grasp of sin. And so, in face of this possibility, which our deepest moral consciousness must admit has become an actuality, joy is not the only element in the heart of God. There must be sorrow as well. This sorrow will not express itself in mere sentimental pity or facile forgiveness. As we believe that the moral nature of God is a constant, there must be in God the attitude of opposition to the sin which human beings have introduced. The conception of the wrath of God does not belong to obsolete systems of theology; it is the correspondence in the Divine to the quickened conscience of the individual, and this correspondence can never cease. But the wrath of God is certainly not the last word. As the moral qualities of God remain constant, so also does His joy; only in face of human sin the joy will be an ideal which has once more to be reached

through the dealing with human sin. In relation to man the joy will now have to express itself in love, which is more than mere benevolence, more than forgetful forgiveness or the gift of enlightenment. It will express itself in redemption, in a bringing of the divine strength to the aid of human weakness, in a restoration of the fallen will. A gospel which consists only in joy can be satisfactory only if the mind *has* been enlightened and the will has been already turned towards goodness; but without a conception of the sorrowing love and regenerating power of God it fails to touch the deepest need of humanity, and appeals only to the select few who have had the benefits of enlightenment and who have already shown to a certain extent a consciousness of the nearness of God. A true optimism must dig deeper and lay broader foundations than Sir Rabindranath has done. It must not represent the unity of God and man so simply that we forget that it is possible to wander far away from God on the paths of evil and of sin, and that the return to God must be much more than placid following of the course of nature. The possibility of return becomes a certainty only if the separating distance and the difficulties of the return have been correctly estimated, only if we realize that the winning of the best often means not only a constant onward progress but also an entire reversal, perhaps through pain, of the direction in which our inclinations have previously led us. There is too little of the cutting off of the offending right hand or foot in Sir Rabindranath's philosophy. There is a danger that when we yearn that 'our emptied life may be dipped in the ocean' and 'plunged in the deepest fullness,' our sense of responsibility may also be engulfed, or that when we say that we must 'become Brahman' we forget that the ideal is communion rather than

unity, and that it is possible for us, and possible for those whose uplifting we desire, to refuse to enter into that communion. A religion which is to lead to victory and permanent joy must be able to deal effectively even with such a refusal.

The philosophy of Sir Rabindranath stands between the old world and the new in Indian thought-development. He retains what is best in Indian pantheistic tradition—its abhorrence of materialism, its intense spirituality, and its conception of the nearness of the divine to the human. He points out relentlessly the defects of abstract Pantheism, and rightly exhibits the religious attractiveness of the concrete world in which we live. He emphasizes the defects of that philosophy which would evacuate our experiences of their highest meaning and deprive us of inspiration for activity. He draws a clear distinction between good and evil, and finds a truly religious basis for morality. He preserves for time and for eternity the value of the individual, and finds an explanation of human freedom in the conception of the self-limitation of God. But his Pantheism still prevents him from sounding the depths of the problems of sin, from realizing all that is involved in this gift of freedom, and from becoming clearly conscious of the central need of the human soul. The progress of Indian religious thought will consist in carrying forward, in greater freedom from the burden of tradition, his critical valuation of his philosophical inheritance, and in a greater readiness to receive and develop the ideas from other sources by which he has already been so largely inspired.

We have now reached the end of the examination of Indian philosophy which has been undertaken in order to discover the pantheistic elements in it

and estimate their effect upon our sense of the value of life. We have examined the development of the philosophy in both academic and popular form, and have attempted to bring our analysis down even to the present day. We have found reason to agree with the truth of the assertion that Indian thought is 'radically pantheistic, and that from its cradle onwards.' We have traced the varying phases of this Pantheism as it developed itself in the two directions of abstract and concrete Pantheism. We have come to the conclusion that, starting with an acute sense of the problems it had to solve, it has not only failed to solve these problems but has resulted in a deeper pessimism. We have tried to assign certain reasons for this pessimism, and have found them in an excessive intellectualism—an insufficient presentation of the religious relationship, a slightness of touch upon ethical distinctions, and a weakness of confidence in individual and social progress. We have fully admitted the intense spirituality of Indian thought, and would agree with those who hold that it has a unique contribution to make to the religious development of the human race. But we hold that it is hampered by the metaphysical doctrines with which all its views of life are permeated, and that religious, moral, and social progress alike will be impossible until a radical transformation of this fundamental mode of thought has been accomplished. We rejoice in the signs of a growingly sympathetic understanding of the East by the West, but we feel that there is a danger lest this sympathy, as it advances to admiration, may increase the existing satisfaction of Eastern thinkers with their inadequate fundamental metaphysics, and may blind them to the need of thorough-going criticism and transformation. We feel that the head of India is sick and therefore the whole heart

is faint. We feel that India is reaching out to better things, and desiring a strength that she does not possess. We feel that her salvation will lie in a union of the strength of the head and the heart, so that the failures of their isolated action may not be repeated, but that together they may reach out to the fullness of human personality, and find in this fullness the revelation of the Divine and the possibility of a communion, bringing peace and vitality both to the individual and to society.

In the next part we shall attempt to draw some further illustrations from Western philosophy of the effect of Pantheism upon life. We do not consider it necessary to enter at any length into the subject of Western Pantheism, both because the ground has been so frequently traversed, and because, as already said, India affords the most conspicuous example of the practical consequences of the pantheistic attitude. Frankly, also, our immediate interest is in tracing the development of Eastern thought, and estimating its effect upon the life of the society in which the writer happens to be placed.

BOOK II

PANTHEISM IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER I

THE PANTHEISM OF THE STOICS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In order to discover whether it is possible to find in ancient Greece any further evidence of the effect of Pantheism upon our sense of the value of life, we may turn for illustration to Stoicism. An earlier point of contact might of course be found in the philosophy of the Eleatics and especially in that of Parmenides. Dr. Barnett, e.g., points out similarity both of development and of result. He tells us that it was at the time when 'the Greek mind was growing from the youthful realism of the Homeric epos to the transcendental idealism of the older Eleatic school, that the Hindus were rising from the level of the Rig-Veda to that of the Upanishads'; and, as to results, he finds that the doctrine of Parmenides is 'in perfect accord with that of the Vedānta.'[1] For Parmenides there is no reality save that of Being, one and indivisible, without internal distinction, and eternal. 'For birth and destruction have been driven very far away; right conviction has rejected them. It abides the same in the same and by itself, and thus remains constantly in its place. . . . There is and can be nothing except being, for fate has bound it down to be whole and immobile.'[2] Parmenides met by a *reductio ad absurdum* the arguments of those who would assign any reality to cosmic processes. 'His

[1] *Heart of India*, p. 11. [2] *Fragment* 8.

metaphysics would tolerate no physics.' There is no such thing as Becoming, and, if a discussion of physics is undertaken, we are warned that in this discussion we are considering only the 'opinion of mortals.' From the strictly philosophical point of view the world of visible phenomena is not-being, and, pretty much after the manner of the Vedāntists, Parmenides explains this world by reference to illusion.

Little would be gained, however, for our purpose by a study of the Eleatic philosophy. For one thing, it has been pointed out that the aim of the Eleatics was much more purely theoretical than that of either the Vedāntists or some of their own countrymen. Thus the effect of their theory upon life would be less obvious. Further, materials with regard to them are not plentiful, so that it would not be easy to gain a clear indication of the practical influence of their theories. We may concentrate, then, on a consideration of the Stoic philosophy—all the more readily as our method is intentionally merely selective and illustrative.

Perhaps it might have been thought that a closer parallel with some of the Eastern systems we have been considering might have been found, towards the close of the development of Greek philosophy, in the philosophy of Plotinus. His chief aim also is to find a unity above all differences. The tendency of his thought is, like that of the negative Vedānta, towards the abstract Infinite. To God no predicates can be applied, and we can reach Him by a reversal of the ordinary process of thought. If the world is to be reached again it can only be by the hypothesis of a series of radiations somewhat artificially elaborated and externally connected with the central Being. The ordinary life is of entirely subordinate value. We are imprisoned

within it as the result of revolt from our proper state. Our effort should be to return to reality by means of contemplation, dissociated from practical activity. In our return we may make use of art, love, and philosophy, but when the goal is reached, all the means are to be left behind, and we shall abide in a condition of pure vision and pure ecstasy —a condition so rare and difficult of attainment that Plotinus himself tells us that he arrived at it only four times in the course of his philosophic life. Yet, apart from the consideration that we have no wish to multiply illustrations from Greek philosophy, we may point out that the very closeness of the similarity between the philosophy of the negative Vedānta and that of Plotinus would lessen the usefulness of a study of the latter in this connection. By varying the conditions even to the extent that a study of Stoicism permits we may get a broader basis for our generalization as to the effects of Pantheism.

The Stoic philosophy might be said to have arisen in a pessimistic atmosphere. Reality and enthusiasm had disappeared from the public life of Greece. The ordinary outlets for the activity of the intellectual man were closed. All he could do was to sink to a lower level and find satisfaction in meaningless employments, or withdraw within himself and discover, in the consciousness of the greater reality and importance of the inner life, encouragement sufficient at least for an attitude of indifference towards the unfavourable aspects of his external environment. As Prof. Davidson says: 'When first it [Stoicism] saw the light, at the end of the fourth century B.C., it came to a declining people—a people past the heyday of their political freedom, with their intellectual interest in truth narrowed, and the disintegrating touch of social

corruption and moral turpitude visibly laid upon them.'[1] In the Roman Empire the condition of things was little better. The rights of the individual were sacrificed to the tyranny of the Emperor. Life was utterly insecure; the virtuous man found himself in a strange country of vice, and could win peace only by exclusion and withdrawal.

Now, even if the general temper of the better class of minds is pessimistic, it does not by any means follow from this that the philosophy in which they take refuge must be pessimistic also. In connection with Indian philosophy, however, we have already seen that unsatisfactory circumstances are apt to engender a predisposition to accept a philosophy somewhat gloomy in character. In any reaction from sorrow and disappointment the first stage will probably be resignation. The effect of repeated frustration of the desires of men is to deaden these desires, and the death of desire is a preparation for the acceptance of fatalism. Relief is found in gloomy acquiescence in inexorable law, and, if purely speculative considerations should at the same time suggest a metaphysical basis of fatalism, such speculations are likely to find ready acceptance. We wish therefore to suggest, merely in passing, that the external circumstances of the Stoics created a spirit of receptivity for a philosophy of a gloomy character; but we do not mean to suggest that such circumstances by any means *necessitated* such a philosophy. Our main question is whether the philosophy which came into vogue supplies a remedy for pessimism or whether it does not rather increase the pessimism from which relief might have been expected. The general conclusion to which we have come is that many aspects of the Stoic philosophy are conducive to pessimism. They

[1] *Stoic Creed*, p. 21.

provide only for the first stage of relief and are powerless to take us further. The very definiteness with which it fixes us at this first stage is in itself a source of pessimism, and of a pessimism which is no longer unconscious. One way of escape is examined and is found to give no permanent solution of distressing problems, and therefore the hopelessness is greater than before.

We should like to draw attention to one or two preliminary considerations. We shall, we think, find reason for regarding the Stoic philosophy as predominantly pantheistic and also predominantly pessimistic, but we by no means rest the chief weight of our argument upon this fact—or rather upon this suggestion—of predominance. We are quite willing to admit the presence of theistic elements in Stoicism, especially in its later developments, and we equally readily admit the presence of optimistic elements reinforcing courage and hope. Further, we are not concerned primarily to estimate the exact proportions between the theism and the pantheism in the one case and the optimism and the pessimism in the other. The main conclusion to which we shall come is that *in so far as* Stoicism is pantheistic, it is also pessimistic. It adopts certain pantheistic premises, and in so far as it is faithful to these premises it finds itself landed, because of the very nature of these premises, in pessimistic conclusions. On the other hand, its optimism may be traced to theistic premises—to considerations which were inconsistent with pantheistic presuppositions, and to arguments which the Stoic had no right to use so long as he was unwilling to abandon his Pantheism. We hold that the only optimism which can be legitimately connected with the pantheistic premises is of a superficial character which cannot successfully stand the

strain of ordinary life. The question of the predominance of either Pantheism or pessimism is relevant only in so far as it throws light upon the degree in which the pantheistic elements prevented the clear realization of the theistic elements and also prevented the latter from exerting that influence upon practical life which might have been possible had they not appeared within a system of which Pantheism was at least an important element. We trust, then, that our argument will not be misunderstood. It does not issue in general statements in regard to Stoicism to the effect that it is all pantheistic or all pessimistic. We contend simply that Pantheism occupies a very prominent place amongst its premises and pessimism amongst its practical conclusions, and we shall endeavour to show that a close connection may be established between these pantheistic premises and these pessimistic conclusions.

There seems to be considerable unanimity of opinion as to the propriety of describing Stoicism as pantheistic. Principal Iverach, in his articles on Pantheism (*Expositor*, 1907), finds in the emotion of the great Stoic leaders a special example of the fascination of Pantheism, and Zeller says, 'Their system was strictly pantheistic.'[1] Uncertainty, however, seems sometimes to arise when we ask how much *more* than Pantheism the system contains. Lecky says that the theology of the system 'was an ill-defined, uncertain, and somewhat inconsistent Pantheism.' Bruce describes the system as a 'heterogeneous compound of materialism, Pantheism, and theism.' Our aim is to bring into prominence the fundamental pantheistic elements in the system, and exhibit their influence upon our estimate of the value of life.

[1] *Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics*, p. 156.

In Cleanthes, almost at the beginning of the history of Stoicism, we find distinctly pantheistic elements. Cf. his 'Hymn to Zeus': 'Thou hast fitted evil with good, so that in all things reigns one reason everlastingly.' We may note, in passing, also that (in his theory of tension) Cleanthes contributed much to a physical theory of the universe, so that from the very beginning Stoic physics and theology are in close contact. We find also hints of the close union between Natural Science and Ethics, which was afterwards to become so prominent, and according to which Ethics was concerned simply with the application to human life of laws drawn from the department of Natural Science. It is important to notice this point, as this primary interest in physical questions may partially explain the materialistic aspect of Stoic Pantheism, and also the conception of law as an irresistible force, acting with mechanical ruthlessness, which to the last played so important a part in Stoic ethics.

Tracing further the pantheistic tendencies, we find Diogenes speaking thus of Zeno: "Οὐσίαν δὲ θεοῦ Ζήνων μέν φησι τὸν ὅλον κόσμον καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν.' When we come down to Seneca we find the position no less clear; cf. *Nat. Quest.* ii. 45. 3: 'Vis illum vocare mundum. Non falleris'; and again in *De Benef.* iv. 7. 8: 'Quid enim aliud est natura quam deus et divina ratio, toti mundo partibusque inserta.' As Zeller puts it: 'God contains the germs of all things in Himself, and produces, according to an unalterable law, the world and all that is therein.' [1]

The Pantheism is throughout treated from both a materialistic and an intellectual point of view. At first, one might even be inclined to accuse the

[1] Zeller, *Stoics*, p. 151.

Stoics of being crude materialists. We have already noticed the materialistic tendency of Cleanthes. We find Zeus described as 'primal fire,'[1] and we are told that nothing exists which is not material. Even the soul is corporeal, or exists as a fiery breath diffused through the body. Zeller gives their position a most uncompromisingly materialistic aspect when he says: 'There can be but one pure and unconditional cause, just as there can be but one matter, and to this efficient cause everything that exists and everything that takes place must be referred'; and again: 'As everything that acts is material, the highest efficient cause must likewise be considered material.'[2]

Before, however, condemning the Stoics as crass materialists, we must remember that they had not to deal with the same sharp distinctions between mind and matter as modern thought presents us with. Further, whilst they were amongst the most materialistic of system-builders, they were also amongst the most religious, and their conception of God as diffused soul or reason makes it possible for them to avoid extreme materialistic consequences. As Bruce says, 'We must look indulgently on the materialistic dross, and give full value to the theistic gold.'[3] Matter was not regarded by the Stoics as dead, inert, and passive. It was full of force, and so gave rise to a dynamic and not a mechanical materialism. It was also instinct with mind, and so it was possible for the Stoics to describe the world indifferently as Zeus, Universal Reason, Destiny, Soul of the Universe, &c. These terms were used of the same Being, only at different stages of development, reminding us of the interchange between materialistic and spiritual conceptions which we have already noted in Eastern thought. As Zeller

[1] Cf. Seneca, *Ep.* 9. [2] Zeller, p. 142. [3] *Moral Order*, p. 114.

says, 'The same Universal Being is called God when it is regarded as a whole, World when it is regarded as progressive in one of the many forms assumed in the course of its development.'[1] Zeus is sometimes described as the primal fire, as the divine Breath, or as the sum-total of all that is real. But, again, he is Destiny, the inner power moulding all things; and, again, the Reason of the world, the Divine forethought of Providence.

But while we refuse to allow that the Stoics are out-and-out materialists, we must not go too far in the opposite direction and think that, because such terms as Reason and Providence are used, we have in Stoicism a fully developed Theism. There is, indeed, a tendency in this direction, especially in later Stoicism. As Prof. Davidson says with regard to later Stoicism, 'The conception of divine personality, as distinct from the universe, becomes more and more articulate.'[2] We find a conception of God as the ideal emerging in Epictetus, and he shows other signs of an inclination to apply personal conceptions to God. But however much, under the stress of practical difficulties, the Stoics might modify their strictly pantheistic position, they never altogether abandoned their fundamental assertion as to the essential identity of God and the world and the absorption of the individual in the *All*. Marcus Aurelius can say: 'You exist but as a part inherent in a greater whole. You will vanish into that which gave you being, or rather you will be re-transmitted into the seminal and universal Reason.' The ideas of Deity and Destiny are throughout united, and Destiny is simply the inexorable world-process. Just as the Stoics shared the early Greek tendency to look upon the life of man as the same in kind with the life of nature, so

[1] Zeller, op. cit., p. 157. [2] *Stoic Creed*, p. 214.

they failed to realize fully the personality of God in distinction from the processes of nature. The Stoic God may be a God of intelligence and of power, but it is impersonal intelligence and impersonal power. In *Med.* vi. 10 Marcus Aurelius speaks of the world as 'either a medley of atoms that now intermingle and now are scattered apart, or else a unity under the laws of order and providence,' and he seems to think it almost a matter of indifference whether there is a Providence or not. This would seem to imply that the doctrine of Providence had little meaning for him. With regard to the general attitude of Stoic philosophy on this question, Lightfoot is probably right when he says: 'The Supreme God of the Stoics had no existence apart from external nature. Seneca himself identifies him with fate, with necessity, with nature, with the world as a living whole.'[1] In any case the doctrine of a personal God as the source of the ideal and the spring of progress was not implied in the doctrine of Providence. Personal communion with God was not promised nor even adequately understood. Thus the Stoic doctrine of Providence is not to be regarded as modifying to any great extent the underlying Pantheism of the system. Further, it provided no defence against fatalism, and this point should be carefully kept in mind as we proceed to examine the question whether the Stoic outlook on life should be described as optimistic or pessimistic.

That the Stoic philosophy should begin in pessimism is what we might be led to expect from a study of the circumstances of the time; but, as we had occasion to point out in connection with Indian philosophy, this by no means implies that it also

[1] Lightfoot, *Comm. on Philippians*, Dissertation, 'St. Paul and Seneca,' p. 294.

ended in pessimism. If we are to arrive at this conclusion it must be by a separate investigation of the main characteristics of the Stoic teaching.

There are many who boldly claim that the Stoics are optimists. Sir Alexander Grant, e.g., in his volume on Aristotle, speaks of 'the elation and spirit of progress in the Stoic creed.'[1] The defenders of Stoic optimism are in the habit of pointing to such conceptions as that of the 'city of God'; they also refer frequently to the Stoic emphasis on freedom, arguing that such conceptions are distinctly hopeful in their tendency. The presence and value of such conceptions must, indeed, be fully admitted; but we think that a fair conclusion would be that the note struck in these conceptions is not a dominant one, but that these conceptions are distinctly connected with elements which are alien to the Pantheism of the Stoic creed. The relieving aspects of the Stoic view of life may be traced directly to causes other than pantheistic, and cannot therefore be put to the credit of Pantheism. On the other hand, not only are the more gloomy views of life, in our opinion, more prevailing in the Stoic philosophy, but they may be connected by fairly obvious causal links with the Pantheism of the system. If we can prove this latter contention, we shall have additional evidence for the decision of the broad general question as to the effect of Pantheism upon our views of life.

A general estimate of the Stoic philosophy of life would, on the whole, lead us to the conclusion that their outlook is a gloomy one. The very name of Stoicism has come to be synonymous with silent endurance of ills that cannot be cured, and this popular usage is not without justification. All particular things are uncertain as to their value

[1] Cf. *Aristotle*, vol. i. p. 317.

and as to the hold we have of them, and they and we together are in the grasp of inexorable law. The Stoic is impressed by the vastness of the world and the small importance of the individual. He is in a world which is too big for him, and his personality, by virtue of which he might hope to alter it, is of the very slightest importance when placed over against the whole. As Marcus Aurelius puts it, 'What a small part of immeasurable and infinite time falls to the lot of a single mortal, and how soon is every one swallowed up in eternity! What a handful of the universal matter goes to the making of a human body, and what a very little of the universal soul too!'[1]

It is, of course, possible to say that even within the limits set by consistency with their pantheistic premises the Stoics were optimistic as regards the whole while pessimistic as regards particulars. Mr. Bradley puts this contrast between the universal and particular points of view in the epigram that, for the Stoics, 'the world is the best of all possible worlds, and everything in it is a necessary evil.' And the same contrast is more elaborately drawn by Caird: 'If Stoicism is an optimism in one aspect of it, it is a pessimism in another. It is pessimistic and hopeless when it looks at the particular things in the world, at the particular phases of its history, at the particular interests of human life; but when it turns to the universe and its law it is optimistic even to the extent of an absolute disbelief in the reality of evil. And it leaves these two aspects of things in unrelieved antagonism.'[2] Now no secure optimism can be based merely on a contrast, nor would it seem possible so to forget the claims of the individual as to be willing to transfer

[1] *Meditations*, xii. 32.
[2] *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, ii. 129.

ourselves unreservedly to the point of view of the whole and be content with optimism as regards the whole. But, even apart from these questions, we shall find it difficult to maintain an optimistic attitude in regard to the whole so long as we interpret this whole pantheistically, and are unwilling to adopt either the exceedingly idealistic procedure of denying the actuality of evil, or the naturalistic procedure of regarding it as a necessary element in the whole. Either of these methods conflicts with our ordinary moral experience; yet, unless they can be legitimately adopted, optimism as regards the whole is impossible.

And, coming back to our position as individuals, which is after all the only position we can permanently occupy, we see little to comfort us. The world of things brings us misery and pain, and, as for the world of persons, they are 'mostly fools,' and we can do little to alter their folly. Our wisest course is to realize that the world is full of problems for which there is no remedy. All that we can do is to retreat from them. The world of men is evil, the world of things is indifferent—we can only retire and find a refuge in our own souls. To cultivate an attitude of indifference towards the practical problems of life is the leading practical precept of the Stoic. As has been said, 'The Stoic stopped short with the ability of the will to nullify evil and pain and render it indifferent. No one can fairly call himself fortunate until death has put it out of the power of chance to harm him.'[1] We must root out our passions, we must school ourselves to hardness, we must give up social life and retire within the mind. But what are such counsels but a practical judgment of pessimism? Life contains little that is worth having. We are to sit so loosely to it as always

[1] Rogers, *Religious Conception of the World*, p. 256.

to be ready to leave it. Cf. *Med.* ix. 10: 'If you perceive that you are over-matched and begin to give way, retire cheerfully into a quiet nook, where you may manage better. And if this will not do, you may give life the slip.' 'If the room smokes, leave it.' The attitude is even more despairing in *Med.* v. 10: 'Since we have nothing but darkness and dirt to grasp at, since matter, motion, and mortals are in a perpetual flux—for these reasons, I say, I cannot imagine what there is here worth minding or being eager about. On the other hand, a man ought to keep up his spirits, for it will not be long before his discharge comes.' [1]

Now it seems futile to speak about 'retiring cheerfully' or 'keeping up one's spirits,' when all that we long for in life is 'discharge from it.' To summon us to cheerfulness, and yet tell us at the same time that we may 'give life the slip' is almost an impossible contradiction which the human mind cannot endure. A creed which allows even ultimately the escape of self-destruction confesses that life is insupportable, and that it can offer no remedy. 'C'est le suprême recours de son impuissance, aneantir quelque chose.' The stern contempt of life shown by the Stoic has often been praised, and it does, at first sight, seem like a noble culmination of dogged endurance. It has been described as 'magnificent,' but the very writer who so describes it has also to admit that 'it is not peace.' In truth, dogged endurance, even when carried to the extreme of death, is not the last word, and we find it difficult even to describe the Stoic attitude as magnificent, when we consider the exceedingly trivial causes for which some of the Stoics were willing to leave life. They often appear like spoilt children flinging out of the room rather than like serious philosophers,

[1] Cf. *Maitrāyana Upanishad*, i. 3.

who have found a real, though grim, deliverance. The pessimistic tendency of Stoicism has been well summed up by Prof. Wenley. After speaking of the 'sorrow, sadness, and hopelessness of the last great Stoics,' he goes on to say: 'How are all the occasions which go to make up human life to be blotted out! When a man has grown to wisdom, when he knows how to remain within the charmed circle of a purely rational self, into what does he retire? With the soul swept and garnished, delivered from obligation to neighbours, from bodily impulse, from those endless interests wherein life is so rich, what is left? Plainly nothing. The moment he gains unity with the world-reason, the wise man finds his agreement is with a shade. Having emptied himself of all that makes life life, he can but fall into despair. Indifference, not action, turns out to be the end for which he has worked. He may, therefore, contemplate suicide as a means of escape from the void to which he has sacrificed everything. Stoicism rendered humanity poverty-stricken. Without civic place, without free personality, nothing remained but consistent despair, or complete contempt of a life which had asked so much, and could repay so little.' [1]

In attempting to describe the pessimism of the Stoics we have already attended to some of its causes. These will be found to present a marked similarity to the causes of pessimism which we found latent in Eastern philosophy. There is the same tendency to abstraction, the same sacrifice of the individual to the whole, the same want of emphasis upon the value of personality. Perhaps we might group the various causes together if we consider more especially the *fatalism* of the Stoic philosophy.

[1] *Preparation for Christianity*, p. 75.

In considering this we must not be forgetful of its materialistic basis. Even though we remember the caution already given against assigning to the materialism of the Stoics its modern and unrelieved meaning, and though we remember that the Stoics, when they speak of 'matter,' often speak of the 'soul' alongside of it, yet a certain amount of oppressiveness still clings to their conceptions. However much we may refine the fundamental material elements, there is still a certain grossness about them, a grossness which does not prevent confusion of values between higher and lower. It seems somewhat depressing to the Stoic mind to think that the things of highest value in the universe are composed of the same *matter* as the most insignificant objects. We seem to detect the influence of this thought in the quotation from the *Meditations* already given: 'Since we have nothing but darkness and dirt to grasp at, since matter, motion, and mortals are in a perpetual flux,' &c.[1] It is not a quotation which we can read without a considerable shock to the higher impulses of our natures. Lotze also seems to hint at the depressing influence of materialism when he speaks of the spirit as being 'sunk into the mere manifestation of an impersonal substance.'[2]

The Stoics must be taken as representatives of the second phase of Pantheism. The human mind has made the transition from the sense of communion with the ultimate source of things to a sense of the vastness and inexorableness of the whole which has issued from that source and which is now, in its totality, the expression of the Divine. The Stoic, indeed, seeks for a universal Self, but, though this Self is sometimes abstractly conceived, it is more frequently bodied forth or objectified in

[1] *Med.* v. 10. [2] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 158.

nature, not certainly nature as an immediate presentation, but Nature as one mighty being, conceived of in its totality, appreciated in its vastness, and feared in its inexorableness. The effect of this is to produce a certain difference between the Stoic and the predominant Eastern way of conceiving the ultimate goal. For the Eastern it was identity with the divine; for the Stoic it is rather acquiescence in law. He does not so much create in us the desire for absorption as summon us to the duty of acquiescence. Thus his tendency is towards a conception of Fate, rather than towards abstract idealism. Of course ultimately the goal is probably the same for the Stoic as for the Eastern philosopher —by means of obedience he will reach identity, or will at least break down the barriers which separate the individual from the whole. But it is not too much to say that the more immediate step of acquiescence is emphasized so as to dominate the whole. The resulting *fatalism* is one of the main causes of the darkness and gloom which pervade a great part of Stoicism. The laws of nature are so inexorably necessary that they come to be conceived of as the decrees of a dark fate, which has no special concern with man. The Stoics assign to man just the same place as they assign to the other things in the universe. There can be no appeal against destiny. There can be but one cause, one law. The little wishes of man are ineffectual, and his freedom is in the last resort an illusion. He has been thrust to the outside of the ever-revolving wheel of the world-process, and is carried round in its never-ceasing circling. We may, indeed, protest, but to do so is folly, and our true wisdom is to let 'fate be our only inclination.' [1] The Stoic quotes with approval the words, 'Fate

[1] *Med.* vii. 57.

mows down life like corn; this mortal falls, the others stand a while.' We are but parts of the whole, and it is the good of the whole that is of importance, not our individual good. It is a creed of fatalism, and the fatalism is the direct outcome of the Pantheism of the system.

As has been pointed out in connection with Eastern philosophy, Pantheism is closely associated with an excessive and exclusive intellectualism, and here again we have a source of depression. Dr. Inge, in his *Studies of English Mystics* (p. 225), points out that Browning's intellectual pessimism was 'the price he was willing to pay for his moral and emotional optimism.' We might turn the statement the other way about, and apply it to the Stoics. It was their intellectual optimism which led to their moral and emotional pessimism. Perhaps it is going a little too far to speak of their intellectual optimism, but we may certainly speak of their excessive trust in the merely intellectual point of view, and may hint at the consequences of this dependence. The tendency of the purely intellectual man is always towards belief in a somewhat abstract unity or totality to which the individual is sacrificed. The theorist is willing to accept a clear, straight-cut unity without troubling himself very much about differences or individual interests which may emerge. Action and reaction should be noticed here. It is the intellectual type of mind which is most disposed to the acceptance of a Pantheism with fatalistic consequences, while at the same time such a Pantheism tends to the destruction of all the non-intellectual elements in our nature. Now, to take up a purely intellectual attitude is to render ourselves almost quite comfortable under a doctrine of fatalism. Still, it is only

[1] Cf. *Med.* 7. 40.

for a time that we can so restrict ourselves, that we can maintain ourselves in the opinion that 'emotions are failures, disturbances of moral health, and if indulged become chronic diseases of the soul.' Soon the other aspects of life claim attention, and our peace of mind is gone. If no satisfaction is given to enthusiasm and emotion, the pent-up forces work destruction. The depths of the heart are stirred and the clear intellectual waters of fatalism are troubled. Then we discover that the troubling of the waters means despair.

Again, we should note also the *exclusiveness* of the purely intellectual attitude. For the typical Stoic the majority of mankind are 'mostly fools.' 'There is no reason why thou shouldst be angry. Pardon them, they are all mad.' [1] The advice given us is, as a rule, that we should leave the fools in their folly. But this is surely not the last word. The social instinct demands satisfaction, and, if the satisfaction is denied, the thought of the struggling mass of humanity becomes a cause of depression. The Stoics were bound to realize, sooner or later, that if they confined themselves only to the saving of their own souls, they not only made that impossible, but they cut themselves off, at the present time even, from the inspiration which comes from belief in struggle for social salvation. For, as Zeller says, 'A system which regards the mass of men as fools, which denies to them every healthy endeavour and all true knowledge, can hardly bring itself unreservedly to work for a state the course and institution of which depend upon the will of the majority of its members.' [2]

It would, of course, be unfair to leave out of consideration the altruism of the Stoics, which is expressed in their sense of an organic unity between

[1] Seneca, *De Benef.* v. 17. [2] Zeller, *Stoics*, p. 326.

themselves and society. Marcus Aurelius, e.g., deduced from this sense of unity the duty of co-operation. 'We are made for co-operation, like the feet, the hands, the eyelids, the upper and the lower rows of teeth.'[1] But so long as the Stoics remain within the circle of Pantheism this altruism does not get free play. It is modified and restrained by the sense of the static character of the universe in which we and all other individuals have to play our part. Under the influence of this conception the altruism of the Stoics becomes primarily occupied with avoidance of trespass on our part into that part of the whole which properly belongs to other people, and with efforts to secure that their places and relations are properly respected both by themselves and their neighbours. And, as is inevitable in a static universe, the emphasis comes to be laid chiefly upon *places*. Until a basis of hope for the world is discovered, there cannot be the inspiration for social service which is drawn from trust in the future of the individual. Thus our altruism is dominated by the actual, and the estimate which the Stoic made of the actual world of persons was that they were 'mainly fools.' In a static universe it is impossible to avoid the reduction of persons to the level of things, and so the attitude which is proper towards the things of the world becomes proper in regard to persons also. Altruism becomes chilled by indifference, and our responsibilities towards our fellow-men are undertaken because failure to perform them would introduce confusion disturbing to our freedom of soul. Injury to the organism of which an individual forms a part would be injury to the individual himself, and therefore should be avoided. Altruism is based on a logical deduction, and in such deductions there is little

[1] *Med.* ii. 1.

strength for the will and no warmer emotional colouring than a refined self-interest. In order to be sharers in the joy of a true altruism the Stoics had to get outside 'the frozen circle' of their Pantheism. No inspiration can be drawn from a presentation of the relation of the part to the whole unless for the whole also there is hope. We shall return to this point a little later.

We find, further, that the Stoic is landed in much the same practical difficulties as the Indian philosopher. He could not argue that the world was 'all very good,' and yet he could not hold out any promise of progress beyond the present evil state. In considering his pessimism we have already spoken of the gloomy view the Stoic took of the world. It was only in moods of philosophic rapture that the Stoic could declare that the world was perfect, and that evil was only the effect of our partial views. Undoubtedly the *theoretic* creed of the Stoics was as described by Professor Davidson: 'Taken in its entirety the world is perfect. This means that there is no such thing as evil in it; for what is real is true—it is, and must be. Pain and suffering indeed there are; but these are not evils, because necessary, and conducive to ultimate good: they are only the "masks" that children use with which to frighten us. They are even necessitated by the principle of relativity—up involves down; valley needs hill; take away one and you take away all.' It is to be doubted, however, whether the Stoic could often or for long maintain himself at the height of his theoretical creed. Would he be always willing to take the point of view of the whole and sacrifice the claims of the individual, admitting 'that imperfection in details is necessary for the perfection of the whole,' or that even what is disagreeable should

[1] *The Stoic Creed*, p. 210.

be accepted provided only that it leads to the health of the universe? Would he be always willing to admit that pain and suffering were not evil, and were conducive to ultimate good? Are we sure that he had in every case passed beyond the childhood stage and detected the face beyond the mask? We are afraid it is not possible for a human being to maintain himself on this high level. It requires too great an abstraction from ordinary experience, too violent a separation from the ordinary interests of life. There is bound to be a relapse. Details of pain and evil will inevitably become insistent again. It has been said that 'they boldly faced the difficulty and denied the facts'[1]; but sometimes the facts were too strong for them. In the midst of political disaster and tyrannical oppression, it might be all very well for the whole, but what about the individual? The Stoics were brought face to face with the problem of *his* misery. They could not explain it by moral reasons or refer it to the perverse will of man, for their doctrine of necessity prevented this. Their only solution was withdrawal and indifference: they could hope for no deliverance in the way of progress. They had to leave the stern facts of the world just as they were. They could 'wrap themselves in their self-conceit, declare the world to be mad, and give themselves no more trouble about the matter.' But such an attitude is at bottom a confession of failure. It may lead even to an attempt to give to evil the sanction of custom; cf. *Med.* vi. 1: 'When you are in danger of being shocked, consider that the sight is nothing but what you have frequently seen already.' A time, however, is bound to come when custom will be an insufficient guide, when it will be impossible to defend the disconcert-

[1] Zimmern, *Introduction to 'Meditations,'* p. xxiii.

ing character of what is by saying that it has always been. The new problems will demand new solutions, and we shall be helpless and in despair unless we can encourage some hope of progress; but this was just what the Stoic could not do, either for the world as a whole or for the individual. Occasionally they might have hope for the world, they might see the dim outlines of the city of Zeus; but it was but a dream city, and no foundations could be laid for it in the pantheistic creed. They were never really able to free themselves from fatalism. Fate determines the destiny of nations and individuals. But, as has been said, 'The popular doctrine of fate is, at bottom, nothing but the shadow of man's immaturity—it is the attitude of the child, not the man. Modern thought has tended to lose the sense of fate, because there is in the modern character that which refuses to be daunted by evil. It takes evil not as a given fact, but as something which is capable of being transformed.' [1] The Stoics were never able to reach this level. What was, had to be, and that was all that could be said about the matter. Even if at times their human nature got the better of their creed, and there might arise for them a vague belief in progress, their hopes would in the end be doomed to failure, for any such progress would be negated at the end of the world-cycle. When the present process of things came to an end, another cycle of world-development would take its place, resembling the previous one in broad features if not even in minutest details, and so on and on for ever and for ever. Even though at the present time, the revolving wheel might bring the world out of the shadow into the sunlight, it would be but for a time, and inevitably the wheel would dip down again into darkness, primeval night,

[1] Rogers, *Religious Conception of the World*, p. 256.

nothingness. All things would be the same over again. 'All things are as they were in the time of those we have buried.' [1]

In regard to the moral progress of the individual, the Stoic was almost equally hopeless. There was a great gulf fixed between the wise man and the ordinary man, and across this gulf hardly any might pass. This would have been all very well if you happened to be a wise man, but if your class happened to be that of the ordinary man, the class of the 'mostly fools,' there was very little hope of escape from it. In any case, escape was possible only by such a killing out of the desires as the ordinary man was incapable of. And what ideal might be set before him, what example of attainment? You might search the pages of universal history, and yet fail to discover the ideal wise man of the Stoic. Where was the evidence that such an ideal could be attained? And yet only in the attainment of it was their salvation. To fail of such attainment was to remain in a state of misery and of despair. The ideal was too high. There was no evidence of its reality, and no steps up to it. It is true, of course, that the Stoic was frequently unconscious of his failure. He was very often complacent. But complacency is not a permanent mood of mind, and, when it gives way, we can be saved from despair only by such a view of life as will give us a moral dynamic. Yet such a view of life was not possible for the Stoics so long as they remained consistent Pantheists. It involves a consciousness of spiritual freedom which the true Pantheist must regard as an illusion, and a faith in the ideal which is contradictory to the total divinity of the actual. This latter point has been well brought out by Lotze. He regards the Stoics as

[1] *Med.* ix. 14.

having failed to find a religious basis for ethics, and shows the impossibility of thinking of an unconditioned 'should be.' 'That which should be or ought to be must have a reality distinct from that which should not be. In this alone consists the absolute worth which is possessed by the ideals pointed out by moral laws.' So the necessity of some kind of theism becomes apparent, for 'a value appreciated by no one, and consisting in pleasure to no one, is self-contradictory.' [1]

The dominance of the Stoic Pantheism prevented them from reaching such a conception. So there remained for them only submission to the general laws of the universe, and a subjective mood of *ἀταραξία*. It is this mood of indifference which is the final and most characteristic attitude of the Stoic. To a certain extent such an attitude may bring relief. It leads, for one thing, to a refusal to give 'hostages to fortune,' and even to a denial that there is any such thing as fortune. It will take no risks with life, and this is an eminently cautious attitude, providing us with a considerable degree of placidity. If you narrow your life sufficiently, you can certainly secure that you will have few anxieties. If you shut your eyes tight enough, you may undoubtedly avoid the sight of disagreeable things. But, at the same time, you must admit that you leave the world an insoluble problem, and that you shut your eyes not only to the ugliness and the evil of it, but also to its goodness and beauty. It is possible so to narrow one's life that nothing is left. The glory and the zest of life disappear. We reach identity with the divine because we have reached nothingness. We have left behind us the interests of humanity, and we reach a mere shell of a soul, a shadow of reality,

[1] Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 158.

and a shadow which fades away and leaves us with —nothing.

In the light of what has been said we can easily understand how the Stoic approval—or at least permission—of suicide is just the culmination of their mood of indifference. The transition in thought is described by Prof. Baillie: 'Life in connection with "things or objects" can only be endured on sufferance. To give up all connection with them is not only no loss, but is positive gain, and in consequence the world of such things can be completely and even deliberately abandoned by the process of justifiable suicide.'[1] Suicide is not, perhaps, a strictly logical result of the attitude of indifference. If indifference were really the last word, why should we care enough for the inconvenience of the world to take the trouble of leaving it? The Stoics tell us, 'If the room smokes, leave it,' but if we are thoroughly indifferent we shall not mind the smoke. In this respect the Eastern philosophers were much more consistent 'indifferentists' than the Stoics. Our impression that, in one sense, the Stoic rushing upon death was due to insufficient indifference is deepened by a consideration of the trivial causes for which they sometimes left life; their action betraying, as has already been said, rather a mood of childish petulance than of genuine indifference.

Nevertheless, in another sense, nothing in life so 'becomes' their philosophy as the leaving of life. Voluntary self-destruction is the most striking and the most convincing practical proof of indifference to life that can be given. It is the only proof which convinces both ourselves and others. Complete and logical indifference is apt to overleap itself. Indifference to life carried so far as to mean indifference whether we leave life or remain in it is

[1] Cf. Baillie, *Idealistic Construction of Experience*, p. 239.

sure to be misinterpreted, by the vulgar at least, as a desperate clinging to life.

Thus we can understand how suicide is the practical culmination which is reached through many stages. The thought of death pervades the Stoic writings to such an extent as to lead one writer to exclaim, 'Death, death—it is this harping on death I despise so much.' Seneca says, 'For this reason, but for this alone, life is not an evil—that no one is obliged to live.'[1] Lecky speaks of the prominence of death in their disquisitions, and of 'the passionate intensity with which they dwelt upon the tranquillity of the tomb.'[2] Death was altogether welcome, and, if it tarried, it might be hastened a little.

This attitude to death is just what we might have expected. It is really for the Stoics a falling back upon their first principles. The 'handful of universal matter' is reabsorbed in the whole. Death is the practical aspect of a solution which has already been intellectually accepted. And it was a complete death for the Stoics who remained consistent Pantheists. For them no personal immortality was to be hoped for. Prof. E. Caird indeed says, 'The Stoic did not think that the highest good lay in the extinction of self-consciousness. He thought that the Self, as such, was universal.'[3] It is difficult, however, to see what we gain by reaching this universal Self. The individual has no distinctness over against it, and it is further, though universal, a self empty of content. It does not save us from a denial of immortality, and it is better to hold, with Prof. Davidson, that immortality, which is undoubtedly believed in by many of the Stoics, is

[1] Seneca, *Ep.* p. lxx.
[2] *History of European Morals*, p. 227.
[3] *Evolution of Religion*, vol. i. p. 373.

impossible for them as strict Pantheists, and represents efforts ' to meet the claims of the human heart which the earlier Stoicism had to a large extent ignored, and to *adjust its Pantheism* to the deeper personal needs of human nature, which were more and more making themselves felt.' [1]

The words in italics in this quotation lead to a last point. It is probable that a charge of want of balance may be brought against the statement which has been given of Stoic doctrine and its consequences. We shall be told that we have started out with the intention of finding pessimistic elements in the Stoic philosophy, and that we have found them, but that, in so doing, we have neglected the other side of the question altogether, and have shown a lamentable disregard of the brighter aspect of the Stoic philosophy. We have overlooked, it may be said, the Stoic doctrine of freedom, their elevating conception of law, their *civitas Dei*, and their belief in Providence.

Now we fully admit the presence in Stoicism of these relieving ideas, but we would point out once more that our aim has been to separate the pantheistic elements of the Stoic system and to trace the direct consequences of these pantheistic elements. We have no immediate concern with aspects of Stoicism which can be shown not only to have no connection with Pantheism, but to be the outcome of principles which are inconsistent with it.

This can, we think, be shown to be the case with the ideas just mentioned. Freedom is not possible to a consistent Pantheist. The Stoics indeed, by their insistence on the power of the man to deliver himself from the grasp of circumstances, and by the rigour of their ethical ideal, would seem to have committed themselves to an anticipation of Kant's

[1] *The Stoic Creed*, p 98. (Italics mine.)

dictum, that 'Thou must,' implies 'Thou canst.' But they could get no metaphysical justification for this point of view, for they could not allow to man a position different from that of other parts of the universe. The same law rules over all things, inanimate and animate, physical and mental. The conception of freedom was illegitimate so long as they continued to be Pantheists, and it could bring no legitimate deliverance. We hear much of the grandeur and elevating power of the conception of law itself, and we may hold that it implies such an insight into the processes of the universe as can give to man a sense of conscious power and so of deliverance and hope; but the grandeur and the elevating power depend on viewing the law as an attempted delineation of the ideal and not as a description of the actual. Further, the Stoics laid so little stress upon the worth of the individual that they could imagine him only as submitting to the law and not as actively responding to it. He was, besides, always much more conscious of the law itself than of his discovery of it. So the law became an alien, ruthless Fate, dragging him hither and thither whether he would or no.

Is the conception of the *civitas Dei* any more admissible—this great ideal world-conception which is supposed to deliver the Stoics from the charge of pessimism and make good their claim to rank as optimists? We have already tried to show that the very possibility of framing such a conception involves a passing beyond Pantheism and an approach towards Theism. It is impossible without at least a partial fulfilment of the conditions described in the quotation from Lotze given above. 'That which should be or ought to be must have a reality distinct from that which should not be.'[1]

[1] Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 158.

Such a demand is implied in Prof. Baillie's description of the community of pure self-conscious beings who would inhabit this 'city of God.' 'Such a communion of pure self-consciousness is only imperfectly realized here and now. It is independent of every "here" and "now"; it is a whole, whose unity lies not in this life, but only in the life apart from all natural conditions—a city of God.'[1] In later Stoicism no doubt the transition is made by which God becomes the Ideal rather than the actual. The practical need of progress forced the Stoics to an attempt to discover a metaphysical warrant for progress. The actual state of the world forces them to consider it, not as already perfect, but as capable of becoming perfect. They were thus led to a more theistic conception of the personality and providence of God. He was to them, at last, perhaps the metaphysical justification of the ideal. But, at the same time, they were led beyond Pantheism. Pantheism cannot admit an ideal without contradiction, for Pantheism involves a deification of the actual, whereas the ideal is a criticism of the actual. Therefore relieving conceptions founded upon a faith in the ideal are impossible for the Pantheist, and the 'city of God' is an impossible vision for the Stoic who remains also a Pantheist. For the optimism of this conception, therefore, Pantheism can claim no credit. The conception was inadmissible, and it was also very vaguely and loosely held. In general the pantheistic implications of fatalism and intellectualism had too great an influence upon the Stoics to be lightly thrown off. So the *civitas Dei* remained merely an ideal, an ideal which lacked the characterization by which alone it could become influential. No way of approach towards it was

[1] *Idealistic Construction of Experience*, p. 234.

discovered from out the actual life of men. It has been described by Seeley, in *Ecce Homo*, as 'an unsubstantial city, such as we fancy in the clouds,' and it was little more. It was a negation of the actual, an outcome of despair over the condition of the actual. It was not a positive construction which would lead to a transformation of the actual and inspire men to take the practical steps necessary for realization. The 'city' was so far away that its outlines could not be discerned. So it failed to attract men. It failed to prevent them from looking upon themselves with complacency, and upon others with contempt. But complacency is not a lasting mood of mind, neither, as Prof. Wenley says, 'can it ever be a gospel.' You cannot reform yourself if you do not think you need reform; you cannot reform others if you do not think them worth reforming. And yet can we, for long, allow that the world needs no regeneration? And when our eyes are opened, what *hope* can the Stoics give us? The ultimate result might have been different if Stoicism had not been so profoundly pantheistic.

CHAPTER II

SPINOZA, HEGEL, AND SCHOPENHAUER

In seeking amongst modern systems of philosophy for further evidence as to the effect of Pantheism upon our sense of the value of life, we do not propose to enter into any great detail. We shall refer only to the systems of Spinoza, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and our treatment of these systems will be exceedingly brief, both because, as was said at the outset, our main concern in exhibiting the relation between Pantheism and value is with Indian philosophy, and because the teaching of the two first-named at least is more purely philosophical than that of older and Eastern philosophers, and its influence upon our practical attitude to life has not been so explicitly stated. In regard to Schopenhauer, again, while the question as to the relative validity of optimism and pessimism has been boldly faced, and there is no uncertainty whatsoever as to the answer given, we have to do with a system which is perhaps not strictly pantheistic, though it is, without doubt, the result of tendencies latent in Pantheism.

The various judgments which have been passed upon Spinoza's philosophy afford a striking proof of that far-reaching fascination of Pantheism which has been already referred to. He has been hailed as one of their leaders by the mystics and by those who lay stress on abandonment to the divine as the chief element in religion. Schleiermacher

speaks of him as 'the holy, neglected Spinoza' and Novalis describes him as a 'Gottvertrunkener Mann.' Pollock devotes a considerable amount of space to showing how his ideas have been reproduced in the poetry of Wordsworth. The scientists claim him as their ally because of his assertion of the unity of nature, and his denunciations of miracles, final causes, and anthropomorphic interpretations generally. Even materialists are not without justification in claiming his support for a denial of the supremacy of mind. We see, then, that the authority of Spinoza is quoted just in regard to those very points where the fascination of Pantheism was most obvious, and we might in this find a proof of the Pantheism of Spinoza, if such a proof were needed.

A proof of this kind, however, would seem to be superfluous. The Pantheism of Spinoza is a matter of universal consent. It is, of course, possible so to emphasize certain aspects of his system as to give us the right to reckon him among the theists. Certain other aspects, also, when emphasized, will warrant us in including him in the ranks of mere materialists; but, as regards the main tendencies of his system, there seems to be no dispute. It has been said that 'in Spinoza we have a mind intoxicated with the thought of unity,' and it is an all-embracing unity. Nothing can even temporarily be outside of it. The *Natura naturans* is coincident with the *Natura naturata*. The things of the finite world, if a finite world there be, are deduced geometrically from the Infinite, which simply means that, as to their essence, they are eternally *in* the Infinite. There can be no existence possessing independence, for a strict determinism reigns throughout the system. God is the cause of all that is, of existence as well as of essence. Especially does

Spinoza satisfy Lotze's exclusion from Pantheism of the idea of creation and his distinction between the latter idea and that of emanation. If creation is excluded, this means simply that the world 'could not be otherwise,' and we find Spinoza explicitly denying to God anything of the nature of choice, and asserting that 'God acts solely by the laws of His own nature.'[1] In a note to Corollary 2 on the same proposition, he strenuously opposes the ascription of any other kind of freedom to God, and says: 'Others think that God is a free cause, because He can, as they think, bring it about that those things which we have said follow from His nature—i.e. which are in His power—should not come to pass, or should not be produced by Him. But this is the same as if they said that it should not follow, from the nature of a triangle, that its three interior angles should be equal to two right angles, or that from a given cause no effect should follow, which is absurd.'

Of course, there are those who claim that Spinoza admits, to a certain extent, the transcendence of God, and they base this assertion on the ascription to Him of '*infinite* attributes.' But Dr. Martineau points out that no use is made of the attributes which extend in infinite number beyond the ones we know, and that the assertion of them is a mere logical adjustment, needed to equate substance when taken in terms of its attributes with substance when defined as an *absolute* unity. As a general rule, though in Spinoza's earlier writings there may be a certain inclination to admit transcendence, yet, in the more typical of his works, it must be allowed that there is nothing in God which is not realized in the world, and that in regard to Him possibility is identical with actuality. It has been said that

[1] Book I Prop. xvii.

'his phrases are ingeniously borrowed from the vocabulary of theism, but outbalanced by plainer propositions which exclude all divine self-consciousness and personality and constitute a system of pure naturalism.'[1]

It will be more useful for our purpose to point out some of the chief similarities between Spinoza's philosophy and the Vedānta. The philosophical problem is set for him in much the same way as for them. At the beginning of *The Improvement of the Understanding* he tells us that his study of philosophy was due to the experience that all the usual surroundings of social life are vain and futile. All evils arise from 'the love of what is perishable.'[2] It is to be noticed, however, that he has much greater hope of success than the Eastern philosophers have. He expects to attain to that which is eternal and infinite and which 'fills the mind with joy, and is itself unmingled with any sadness, wherefore it is greatly to be desired and sought for with all our strength.'[3] He follows the Vedāntist also in laying almost exclusive emphasis upon the intellectual activity of our nature as the means by which we are to effect deliverance. The happiness which he speaks of is to be obtained by a 'knowledge of the union existing between the mind and the whole of nature.' In the individual life the disturbance and the misery are caused by our passions, and it is by the power of the understanding that we can escape from their sway. Cf. *Ethics*, Prop. v. 3: 'An emotion which is a passion ceases to be a passion as soon as we form a clear and distinct idea thereof.' Further, this power is universal in its extent, for in the very next proposition we are told that

[1] Hunt, *Pantheism*, p. 220.
[2] *Improvement of the Un derstanding*, p. 5, Elwes's trans.
[3] Op. cit. p. 6.

'there is no modification of the body whereof we cannot form some clear and distinct conception.' The corollary to the same proposition explains that this means 'that there is no emotion whereof we cannot form some clear and distinct conception.'

The great similarity between the systems of Spinoza and the Vedānta is, however, most strikingly brought out when we consider the difficulty of deciding to which phase of Pantheism his philosophy properly belongs. There are those who call him an *acosmist*, and others who call him an *atheist*. It is pointed out, on the one hand, that 'it was not God, but the world of finite things which Spinoza denied.' He seems to care for little but abstract unity, and in the development of his philosophy finds great difficulty in deriving the finite world from his unitary substance. We are never explicitly told whether the attributes really constitute the infinite essence of God, or whether it is only from our finite point of view that they appear to do so. The Absolute is reached by the dropping of all qualities. He cannot allow the ascription to God of intellect and will such as men possess. Cf. *Ethics*, Bk I. Prop. xvii. Cor. 2: 'If intellect and will appertain to the eternal essence of God, we must take these words in some signification quite different from that they usually bear. For intellect and will, which should constitute the essence of God, would perforce be as far apart as the poles from the human intellect and will.' This statement Spinoza goes on to prove, in the same note, by pointing out that the intellect of God must be anterior to the things understood, whereas the human intellect can only be simultaneous with, or posterior to, the things understood. As a result of Spinoza's reasoning, we would hardly seem to be left even with the 'sat-chit-ānanda' of

the Vedānta, for, as has been said, 'he rescinded from his religious conception one constituent after another, as he found it to be untenable, i.e. incompatible with his postulates.' The mystical tendencies of Spinoza are also worthy of mention here. His 'amor intellectualis Dei' bears a close resemblance to the emotional absorption in God which is the ideal of the Vedāntist, and leads to that same subjective mood which is satisfied with unity alone, and disregards entirely the plurality into which the unity may be developed. He compares this plurality to the waves upon the sea, having as little reality as the colours upon the crystal in the symbol of the Vedāntist. In regard to certain aspects of his philosophy it may be truly said that 'the finite world is a mere impertinence in his system, and that logically he should have dispensed with it altogether.' [1]

There is a curious similarity also in the exact point—if we might so call it—at which contact with the Absolute is reached. We found that the root idea of the Vedānta philosophy was the identification of Ātman and Brahman, the individual and the universal Soul. With Spinoza also the universal is to be reached through a deeper knowledge of the self. Cf. *Ethics*, Bk. V. Prop. xv.: 'He who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his emotions loves God, and so much the more in proportion as he understands himself and his emotions.'

And yet Spinoza, like the Vedāntist before him, found it necessary to reconcile himself more fully with ordinary experience, and so we find him passing over to the other phase of Pantheism, in which it becomes possible to speak of the 'naturalistic' tendencies of Spinoza's thought, and even to class

[1] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, p. 305.

him as an atheist. God becomes identified with the actual universe in its totality. Law describes Spinozism as ' nothing else but a gross confounding of God and nature.' Spinoza found it difficult indeed to derive this actual world from the abstract substance with which he began. His geometrical method itself was a hindrance, allowing, at the best, only for the derivation of essence, and not the explanation of existence. The abstract character of his primary substance did not seem to contain within it the specific possibilities of finite things, and they had to be brought in empirically, in contradiction to the avowed deductive aim of the philosophy. His ultimate unity had been reached by a process of abstraction, and the result, when reached, was wholly abstract, and contained within it no such potencies as could become differentiated into the concrete realities of the world. Yet, though finite things had to be empirically introduced, when they entered the world system they were wholly seized by it. They found themselves ruled by an inexorable necessity. Whether the world is conceived from the point of view of thought or the point of view of extension, no freedom can be allowed to any part of it. God is the cause of both adequate and inadequate ideas. Cf. Bk. II. Prop. xxxvii. : ' Inadequate and confused ideas follow by the same necessity as adequate or clear and distinct ideas.' Spinoza thinks himself bound to uphold the principles of pure science, to the extent of denying all value to human volition. To him, the latter seems to contradict the principle of causality, and this principle must be upheld at all costs. Determinism is Spinoza's watchword. As Pfleiderer says : ' The principle of causality, inexorably strict, but also, it must be allowed, harsh and one-sided, is what is most peculiar to Spinoza ; the

idea of the law-abidingness of the world, considered quite objectively, and strictly dissociated from all subjective interests, emerges in him with the energy of a newly discovered principle.' [1]

Now it might be expected that, when we find such close similarity between Spinoza's system and the Vedānta philosophy on so many points, the similarity would extend to the pessimism also. As a matter of fact, pessimism does appear to be the logical outcome of Spinoza's teaching, but, at the same time, we must remember that he is usually classed among optimists, and that there is certainly some justification for this. When we compare the tone of the first sections of *The Improvement of the Understanding* with that of certain parts of the Upanishads in which the problem to be solved is described, we are struck with the greater hopefulness of Spinoza. He is confident of obtaining a solution or a deliverance which will bring joy and peace. He has greater faith in the possibility of the attainment of positive happiness, and the strength of his faith is in proportion to the strength of his belief in natural harmony.[2] There are several other propositions in the same book of a thoroughly optimistic character. Cf. Prop. xli. : 'Pleasure itself is not bad, but good : contrariwise, pain itself is bad.' And again, Prop. xlii. : 'Mirth cannot be excessive, but is always good : contrariwise, melancholy is always bad.' Pleasure, further, is defined as 'the feeling in which the mind passes to greater perfection.' There is also the manifestation of a more vigorous social spirit. The good which is to be attained is a good in which others may share. By reaching agreement with their own true nature, men necessarily reach agreement with each other, and enter into a fellowship

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i. p. 43.
[2] Cf. Bk. IV. Props. xxxi. and xxxii.

in joy. Cf. Bk. IV. Prop. xxxvi. : 'The highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein.' Cf. also Prop. xl. : 'Whatsoever conduces to men's social life, or causes men to live together in harmony, is useful, whereas whatsoever brings discord into a State is bad.' Further, the grandeur of Spinoza's conception of natural law must be admitted as an inspiring factor. His attitude towards death also is in striking contrast to that of the Stoics. With Spinoza, the free man is one 'who thinks of anything rather than death, whose wisdom is a reflection on life, not on death.' [1]

And yet we are by no means sure that we shall be justified in ultimately reckoning Spinoza amongst the optimists. His optimism is based upon somewhat insecure foundations. It is possible only because of his narrow and superficial view of the difficulties of thought and life, and because of his failure to work out fully the implications of his own philosophical principles. He had, as a rule, an unbounded confidence in the power of knowledge. There was no source of evil, no overwhelming passion from which it could not deliver us. It must, however, be remembered that, in his time, the limits of possible knowledge were not very widely extended, and a wisdom of a universal character was not regarded as unattainable. If he had lived into the time of the modern expansion of knowledge, a mood of greater humility might have come upon him, and, with the disappearance of intellectual confidence, latent pessimistic elements might have begun to appear. Further, we must not omit to notice Spinoza's practical detachment from ordinary human concerns. His interest in social welfare was mainly theoretical. For the most part he lived in

[1] Cf. Bk. IV. Prop. lxvii.

isolation, without interest in the ordinary affairs of humanity. Spinoza lived through one of the most exciting periods of European history, and yet absolutely no reference to it appears in his works. This indifference to political events was probably a symbol of indifference to nearer social interests. Spinoza's attitude to his fellow-men often approaches the exclusiveness of the Stoics. Strict adherence to intellectual virtue will often place the free man at variance with his fellows, and on this account he will strive to enter into as few relations with them as possible. Cf. Bk. IV. Prop. lxx. : 'The free man who lives among the ignorant strives, as far as he can, to avoid receiving favours from them.' We may note in this connection also his view of pity, humility, shame, repentance, as little more than vices in that they betray a weakness which is unworthy of the enlightened man. The result of such an attitude of indifference was to render Spinoza to a great extent unconscious of the magnitude of the problems of pain and evil which he had to solve, and it is easy to be cheerful when one can shut one's eyes to misery. As has been said, 'He cared little for the world he lived in, provided it were only one.'

In addition to questioning the trustworthiness of what might be called Spinoza's accidental grounds for optimism, we may ask whether his main support is any more to be depended on. Can we at all justify his exclusive trust in the intellectual method of obtaining moral deliverance? Can the intellectual impulse become a religious or moral impulse of such power as Spinoza would attribute to it? Pfleiderer is very emphatic in his disapproval of Spinoza's position here, and points out that he lays far too much stress upon the purely intellectual impulse, 'which of all others has the

remotest connection with morality and the faintest influence on it.'[1] He also points out how difficult it is to find in mere joy in adequate ideas a sufficient motive for action. Spinoza himself, it should be noted, seems to feel at times the inadequacy of mere knowledge. In Bk. IV. Prop. xiv. he says: 'A true knowledge of good and evil cannot check any emotion by virtue of being true, but only in so far as it is considered as emotion,' i.e. he seems occasionally to feel the necessity of giving the ideas a more emotional colouring and effectiveness before they can become available as moral forces. The truth is that, if we follow Spinoza faithfully, we have to use forms of thought in a sphere for which they are not suited and with the problems of which they are not competent to deal. The intellect in its own native sphere works merely by means of affirmation and denial. This cannot readily be translated into activities of furtherance or opposition. We are met here again by the difficulty which is fundamental in regard to Spinoza's thought, viz. his inadequate conception of causation. He failed to distinguish between the merely logical idea of ground and the cause of existence, and, on account of this failure, he felt himself at liberty to use logical conceptions in a sphere to which they did not belong. He failed to distinguish between *essence* and *existence*, and attempted to deal with existence by means which are adequate only for dealing with essence. He thus laid upon pure thought a burden greater than it could bear. Evil lay in false ideas, and deliverance was to be wrought by changing these into true ideas. False ideas in themselves were powerless, 'for there is nothing positive in ideas which causes them to be false.'[2]

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i. p. 56.
[2] Cf. Bk. II. Prop. xxxiii.

Thus Spinoza seems to have considered that by dealing with practical problems merely from the point of view of thought he had thereby to a great extent diminished their difficulty. By transforming it into a problem of thought, he had thought evil away. But such easy transition from the world of thought to the world of extension and back again seems to be at variance with the principles of Spinoza's philosophy. The double-aspect theory excludes interaction. How, then, can reason exercise such an influence upon the organic impulses as would seem to be implied in Spinoza's system? How also are the problems of the practical world of extension at all diminished by being transferred to the sphere of thought? The modes of the two attributes are co-extensive—to use, for a moment, a word strictly appropriate under only one of the attributes. By being transferred, then, to the thought side of reality the practical problems of life are not solved, they are merely doubled, or rather the mind is made aware of their double aspect, according to the requirements of Spinoza's system. Translated into ordinary everyday language, this means that Spinoza's solution is nothing more than a description of the way in which the mind becomes aware of practical problems; it is by no means a solution of them. It is a diagnosis, and not a cure.

A further investigation into the course of Spinoza's thought would seem to show that this is to all intents and purposes admitted by Spinoza himself. Allowing that evil consists only in inadequate ideas, we have still to deal with these ideas themselves. How came they there, and what is their effect upon our estimate of the character of the thought world? They are still realities, even though intellectualized, and by Spinoza's own confession they owe what reality they have to God. Cf. Bk. II. Prop. xxxvi.:

'Inadequate and confused ideas follow by the same necessity as adequate or clear or distinct ideas.' These inadequate ideas, therefore, take their place as part of a system which is throughout real with the reality of God. We cannot, therefore, think them away, and thus cannot in this way get rid of the passions which are based upon them. Further, they are not mere empty phantoms—they have considerable effect, for the passions which arise from them are described by Spinoza as *obstinately* clinging to the finite. Moreover, the power which we are to set over against these inadequate ideas and their consequences is the power of the free intellect, as it sees all things in God, and as it attains its unity with God. The force which is available for deliverance would seem to depend on the degree of community between the human soul and God—upon the degree in which all separation between man and God is removed. Thus the force is ultimately a divine force—the force of God Himself. But what position are we now landed in? The only power which we have available for combating the influence of these false ideas, and for transforming them into adequate ideas, is the same force which produced them according to the same necessity with which adequate ideas were produced. The only force which can work in connection with the inadequate ideas is the mind's own essence. But this is ultimately God. Therefore God must work for the destruction of the ideas which He Himself has caused. Drawing out the consequences of this a little further, we may say that temptation comes from the same source as the moral power which is opposed to it. We are thus left in a contradictory position, and are forced to ask the question, Which is the deeper aspect of the reality of God—the force by which He provides temptation

or the force by which He opposes it? We are left without an answer to our question, and in the very absence of a solution there is a cause of depression.

Thus, even within the reach of this intellectual treatment, the distinction between adequate and inadequate ideas remains. We may grant that evil is due to inadequate ideas, but still the inadequate ideas are there, and evil is not made any less by rebaptizing it. It still remains true that a world in which there are inadequate ideas must be less perfect than a world in which there are none but adequate ideas.

We must now turn to Spinoza's second remedy for evil. Having failed to negate evil by thinking it away, he takes refuge in the thought of its *necessity*. Everything in the world is inevitable, it had to be, and no other way is possible. Spinoza is never tired of attacking the position of those who allow the possibility of choice either on the part of God or on the part of men. There are never any alternatives in the nature of things: our belief in them is only a subjective illusion. There is only one line of development, or rather of deduction, with geometrical precision and necessity. It follows from this that there is nothing which we can say ought not to have been—in other words, there is no objective reality corresponding to the notions of evil, pain, and defeat. They are subjective notions merely, due to our failure to reach the point of view of the whole. We human beings suffer from an excessive sense of our own importance, and judge everything from our own point of view. 'After men persuaded themselves that everything which is created is created for their sake, they were bound to consider as the chief quality in everything that which is most useful to themselves, and to account those things the best of all which have the

most beneficial effect upon mankind. Further, they were bound to form abstract notions for the explanation of the nature of things, such as goodness, badness, order, confusion, warmth, cold, beauty, deformity, and so on; and from the belief that they are free agents arose the further notions of praise and blame, sin and merit.' [1]

Our judgments of value, then, such as are implied in the terms 'good' and 'bad,' are without foundation in reality. What we call good and what we call evil are equally necessary. Evil is a fact, but then it is no longer to be called evil, because it is necessary. This assertion of the inevitableness of evil may give a certain amount of relief, but it is not one to which the moral consciousness of men will for long consent. They will not agree to disregard their fundamental moral distinctions. A view of the world which is not superficial, and is at the same time unbiassed, will not suffer them to allow that the world, as it actually exists at the present moment, is all very good. But yet they can discover no possibility of progress according to Spinoza's philosophy. In themselves there is no initiative—human freedom is a delusion. There is no reason, they are told, why they should seek for improvement, for that dissatisfaction with the present which is the spring of true progress is all a mistake. The 'notions of praise and blame, sin and merit,' are mere human fictions, and to cherish such notions is a sign of weakness. Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—men cannot regard these moral valuations in a way which would fit in with Spinoza's philosophy, and yet, when the mood of dissatisfaction comes upon them, when they *demand* progress, what genuine comfort can they find? 'The *real* is co-existent with the *possible*'—therefore, there is

[1] *Ethics*, Bk. I. Appendix.

no hope. Spinoza substitutes the notion of 'quantitative totality' for that of ideal perfection, but the notion that we are simply parts of a 'quantitative totality' is ultimately a depressing one, especially if this totality cannot be regarded as perfect and if our sense of its imperfection cannot be relieved by a consciousness of human freedom to strive towards a better state of things and a faith that the world system will encourage, or at least allow, such ethical endeavour.

We have, further, in Spinoza no such doctrine of immortality as would give validity to our sense of the permanent value of human personality. The intellectual love of God would seem indeed to unite us with God when we love—or know—and to make us partakers of His immortality. But this love is not a personal affection, such as can exist as a relation between two persisting realities. It is simply the permanence in God of the true thought, and this permanence of the idea does not carry with it the permanence of the human thinker who has the idea. The individual is valueless, if continuance can be held to be at all a criterion of value. Our existence becomes finally a phantom sort of existence, without reality in itself, and powerless to combat the evils of which it is yet acutely conscious.

We propose to make only a passing reference to the Hegelian system, with the sole purpose of pointing out some of the aspects in which it may properly be described as pantheistic, and deducing a few of the consequences of this Pantheism.

Mr. McTaggart, indeed, would deny that Hegel is a Pantheist. Because the Absolute is left bereft, to a great extent, of predicates which would constitute personality, Mr. McTaggart refuses to

ascribe to Hegel a belief that God exists. Only individual beings exist—the Ultimate Being is a multi-unity, and, therefore, Hegel is not really a pantheist, but an atheist. This view, however, seems to be rather an excessive emphasis upon one side of the relation which, it must be admitted, Hegel never satisfactorily stated. It is true that he did not give any very clear teaching as to the apportionment of reality between the divine and the human, but he would hardly have consented to describe the individual thinkers as alone real.

Hegel is above all things a *monist*. His immediate philosophical problem was to get rid of the dualism of Kant and to find some place, within a unitary system, for that uncomfortable 'thing in itself.' He returns to the spirit, at least, of Spinoza, but he has been described as turning the 'determinatio est negatio' of the latter into 'negatio est determinatio.' The Absolute is not characterless, but contains within itself the germs of development, and evolves itself by a continual process of negation and transcendence of that negation. The process is to be interpreted throughout in terms of the dialectical development of thought, and is to be regarded as a process of development either within or from the sole reality, which is God.

But this identification of logical dialectic with metaphysical development immediately brings us face to face with a difficulty. Undoubtedly the process of thought is from vagueness to clearness, from ideas which are seen to be inadequate and to involve their contradictories to ideas which shall be both adequate and self-consistent, until finally we reach a systematization of experience and an all-inclusive idea or notion. When, however, we attempt to turn this logical process into a metaphysical account of world-development, we are

met by curious results, and it is on account of these results that Hegel claims consideration in connection with our present topic. In a word, we find reappearing in Hegel tendencies towards acosmism on the one hand and naturalism on the other.

When we concentrate our attention on the aim of all serious thinking, viz. the attainment of truth, we must consider the process as one from error to truth, and we must be prepared, so long as we occupy the purely intellectual point of view, to regard the stages of error as *ipso facto* swept out of existence as soon as truth has been attained. In other words, we must be prepared to regard every stage except the last as an inadequate and unreal thought determination. Taken by themselves the lower stages may be 'complementary aspects of truth,' but each one is unreal from the point of view of the highest.

On the other hand, when we regard truth not as something to be attained in the long run, but as something which is being gradually developed, each stage becomes a necessary element in the evolution of the whole and partakes of the reality of the whole.

When we pass from logic to metaphysics, the difficulty reappears. Which aspect of the thought process are we to make use of in our metaphysical description of the world? Hegel sees the difficulty and hesitates as to his answer. We never get a clear indication from him as to whether the various phases of the finite world are to be regarded as a series of illusions or whether they constitute a development which is real and necessary in all its stages. The dilemma is well put by Prof. Pringle-Pattison: 'We must either say that the Absolute exists in eternal perfection only at Z, and that the other stages are something very like subjective

illusion, or admit a growing Absolute.'[1] In other words, is all development of the Absolute only apparent, or is the Absolute itself developed? There is much that is attractive about the first view, which, it will be seen, bears a close resemblance to the first phase of Indian Pantheism, and which is associated with the same advantages and disadvantages. It enables us to deal with evil in a quick and apparently satisfactory manner. Uncomfortable details are got rid of by bringing them under the category of the contingent, which is equivalent to denying their existence. Hegel finds the weapon of illusion of great use in combating the forces of evil. The difficulties of the actual are to be regarded as belonging to the class of 'untrue existences,' and, therefore, do not count.

As has been pointed out, however, in connection with other systems, it is difficult, except in moments of rare philosophical abstraction, to dispose of evil in this way. When the philosophical mood passes away, evil is apt to become insistent again, and we are without a refuge. Again, Hegel cannot carry us with him so far as to induce us to give our consent to the sacrifice at once of the reality of our ordinary experience and of our individuality. We are invited to take refuge in the Absolute, but the Absolute appears to be very like a tomb in which all warm human interests are interred. Hegel is ready to invite us to enter it, because to him individuality is of little importance. He takes the purely intellectual point of view at which the thinker is regarded as no more than his thought and 'our minds are no better than shifting heaps of precepts, principles, syllogisms.'[2] What does it matter what becomes of us so long as our thought persists? The clinging

[1] *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 193.
[2] Mackintosh, *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 180.

to a more concrete continuance is the sign of a mind which dwells upon low philosophic levels. The words which Schelling used of Fichte might be applied to Hegel in this connection: 'The ultimate goal of all endeavour may be represented as the enlargement of personality to infinity, i.e. its annihilation. The ultimate goal of the finite Ego, and not only of it but of the non-Ego, the final goal, therefore of the world, is its annihilation.' If such words can justly be applied to Hegel—and we think that to one aspect of his system, at least, they may be—we feel inclined to agree to a certain extent with the verdict passed upon his theory of life that 'it is the most hopeless theory ever offered to mankind.' We are invited to sacrifice what we ought never to be called upon to sacrifice, and we cannot cease to lament our loss.

When we consider the other possible interpretation of Hegel's philosophy—that according to which the Absolute is regarded as itself the subject of development—we are met by consequences almost equally destructive of our sense of human values. We seem to be landed in a system of naturalism and mechanism. There is no possibility of escape from this system; no freedom is allowed to man. He is but an insignificant part of the whole, with no meaning except in reference to the whole, and depressed by a sense of his bondage. As Dr. Inge says, 'The systems of Spinoza and Hegel are found unsatisfactory by all who lay much stress on human volition.'[1] We have, further, to accept this system as it is, for it is all-inclusive, and we can obtain no point of view outside of it, from which it may be criticized. Thus we are committed almost to a deification of the actual, and, however much we may protest against this, however acutely conscious

[1] *Studies in English Mystics*, p. 7.

we may be of present evils, we have no relief. We cannot, while entertaining this interpretation of Hegel's teaching, deny that evil is a fact. We must admit the facts, and all that we can do is to deny that they are evil, and take up a position in regard to them which is practically identical with Spinoza's doctrine of necessity. This would seem to be the direct outcome of Hegel's purely logical point of view. As has been said, 'To the strength of his logic—his mere logic—tears and blood and sins are negligible quantities.' What we call evil is simply a wrong point of view. The real is rational and there is no room for 'ought to be.' If we could see clearly enough, we would understand that there is nothing which ought to be, which is not, and nothing which is, which ought not to be. The effect of such a doctrine is to legalize custom and justify all existing institutions. As has been said, 'Hegel's philosophy of history has no future' (Haym). There is no room for improvement—each succeeding stage will be the natural and necessary outcome of the previous stage, and contain no elements that will give it greater value or perfection. We can find merely *process* in the world, not *progress*. We may call this process development if we will, but this word must not be used to imply improvement. If such a notion as improvement can be entertained at all, it can be improvement only from the point of view of God and in the sense merely of fuller self-realization. For man there is no hope of improvement, and, if he follows Hegel faithfully, he will try to persuade himself that there is no need for it. If the facts of life and the stirrings of his moral consciousness make such persuasion difficult, so much the worse for the facts and his moral consciousness. To demand progress is unnecessary, and is also futile, for man cannot do any-

thing to help towards a better state of things. He is told that the evil he sees will disappear, and that it will disappear simply by letting things take their course. The process is intrinsically rational, and will work out its own salvation, apart from human intervention. All that man can do is to let things take their course.

Can we, however, be content with this? Even Hegel himself admits that when you take the world in cross-section it may be regarded as evil, and is good only when you think of its progress; and, however this may contradict his other assertions that the present real is rational, and that there is no need for progress, this somewhat pessimistic admission seems to be more in accordance with the general sense of mankind. As they look at the actual which is about them, they can hardly regard it as perfect in every part, and if the next stage is to be simply a logical and necessary development from the present stage, and if there is no opportunity given for the reforming action of human volition, and no consciousness of the increasing purpose of God, then all hope of progress is destroyed, and the moral characteristics and proportions of the present stage will be simply transferred to the next stage. It has been said that the root meaning of causality is conservation of energy, and, if we allow nothing but causal sequence of the strictest kind in the moral sphere, it is difficult to avoid a doctrine of the conservation of evil. Not only is evil justified for the present, but it seems to be justified for the future as well.

We do not think that mankind can be finally and permanently comforted by the doctrine of the necessity of evil, or even by being told that evil is a lesser good. We wish to be assured of ultimate victory, and turn away in disappointment from

the sorry consolation that, if we could only see far enough, we would understand that victory is really unnecessary. We feel that there is something wrong in this abolition of the distinction between right and wrong, and for our own soul's peace we require forgiveness, which is something very different from discovering that there is nothing to forgive.

We may be accused of having given a one-sided presentation of Hegel's teaching, but we would repeat that our purpose has been simply to pick out the more pantheistic elements and discover their explicit or implicit influence on our judgments of the worth of life. It seems to us an unavoidable conclusion that this influence is on the whole pessimistic.

We may refer finally to the system of Schopenhauer as an illustration, not directly of Pantheism, but of the disruptive tendencies latent in Pantheism, and we would regard his undoubted pessimism as a mood which finds abundant support in Pantheism and the conceptions which he shared with pantheists, rather than as the direct outcome of Pantheism.

Though Schopenhauer does not call himself a pantheist, he is, nevertheless, quite ready to place himself in the line of descent from the pantheistic systems already discussed. He declares in the frankest manner his indebtedness to the teaching of the Eastern philosophers and his adherence to some of their positions. The translation of the Upanishads by Anguetil Duperron, published in 1801 or 1802, was to him, he says, a 'very treasure-house of philosophical truth.' He thus refers to Duperron's book: 'In the whole world there is no study, excepting that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Oupnekhat*. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of

my death.' He regards the revival of Sanskrit literature as no less valuable a gift to the Western world than the revival of Greek learning. A study of such 'deep, original, and sublime thought' as the knowledge of Sanskrit makes possible, forms also, in his opinion, the best propaedeutic for his own philosophy. In return it has been said of him that 'the nearest approach to what Śaṅkara means by subject and object is found in Schopenhauer's *Wille und Vorstellung*.'

At the same time, he does not regard himself as indebted to the explicit thought of the Upanishads as distinct from their general spirit. The similarity between his own system and the Vedānta is rather just another illustration of the fundamental similarity of all great minds and the identity of all thought. 'I might,' he says, 'if it did not sound conceited, contend that every one of the detached statements which constitute the Upanishads may be deduced as a necessary result from the fundamental thoughts which I have to enunciate, though these deductions are by no means to be found there.'

From Stoicism he regarded himself as differing only in the means which were adopted to secure deliverance from the finite, and not in ultimate aim. Stoicism was, for him, too purely intellectual a system. It found the ultimate reality in Reason, and such an assertion regarding the metaphysical substratum of the universe was, for Schopenhauer, an unjustifiable assumption. The deduction, therefore, that to live according to reason was the proper way to secure deliverance, depended upon untrustworthy premises. He further criticized the Stoic system because it allowed the means to swallow up the end. The end was harmony and inward peace, the means was virtue; but the Stoics soon came to urge the practice of virtue for its own sake, and

to make rational conduct an end in itself upon the unjustifiable assumption of the ultimate rationality of the world.

As an evidence of the failure of the Stoic method, Schopenhauer explicitly refers to their recommendation, or at least permission, of suicide. It is worth noticing that this recommendation of suicide, which most men would regard as indicating profound depths of pessimism, is by Schopenhauer regarded as a sign of insufficient pessimism. To give up life because of its misery is to give up life because it has failed to bring what was expected of it. Suicide is a sign of a belief that life is inherently worth living, though the particular man who is ready to commit suicide has failed to secure that worth. If we sufficiently realized the worthlessness of life, we should not even take the trouble to leave it. The failure of the Stoic method which is indicated by their recommendation of suicide does not consist so much in the fact that suicide is not a solution, but in the sign which their advocacy of suicide gives, that they have not realized how insoluble the problem is. It is not so much that their particular remedy is unavailing as that they have not yet reached the stage of perceiving that *all* remedies which depend upon the assertion of the individual will are unavailing. Still, on the whole, the similarity between Schopenhauer and the Stoics is fairly obvious. There is in both systems the same seeking after deliverance, the same despising of the ordinary interests of life, the same tendency to find refuge in the abstract unity of the One or All.

It is not necessary to dwell upon Schopenhauer's relation to Spinoza. It is, however, interesting to note that he prided himself upon having been born exactly 111 years and one day after Spinoza, and that he took this fact to be almost a proof of

the doctrine of transmigration, or at least a sign that the mantle of the earlier philosopher had fallen upon him. He speaks of a certain portion of Spinoza's philosophy as 'the most effective means I know of stilling the storm of the passions.' [1]

We may, however, retrace our steps a little, and consider more fully Schopenhauer's debt to the teaching of the Upanishads. For him, as well as for the Eastern philosopher, the goal of all thought and endeavour is deliverance from this present world of misery. He starts out from a pessimistic attitude to the world and to life. The world is without hope in itself, and life in it is an unending succession of torments. The prevailing characteristic of human life is pain. Desire in itself is pain, and as soon as one desire is satisfied another takes its place. There is never any finality in the satisfaction of desires. And yet man is psychologically so constituted that, unless he is able to make the supreme effort of *abandoning* will, he is bound over and over again in the chain of finite causes. But as long as he is thus bound there is no hope for him. The only hope lies in escape from it all. 'The one thing needful is to make haste and come forth, and here too the manner of escape matters not.' The last clause of this quotation is noteworthy as indicating that Schopenhauer's philosophy had in it no positive principle or aim, but only the negative one of obtaining deliverance. The mystical mood is as fully developed in Schopenhauer as in the philosophers of the East. He can easily put himself at the point of view from which he sees nothing in the world but phantoms and unrealities. Such a mood is regarded by him as the only truly philosophical mood, for, as he himself says, 'He to whom man and all things have not at times appeared

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, p. 497.

as phantoms has no capacity for philosophy.' His attitude to ordinary life is well described by Prof. Wenley: 'Life itself is an unreality, the suppositious part of the individual is a myth, and the same may be said not only of his future, but of all mankind. Immortality is an illusion. For to gain perfection man must divest himself of his own self-hood, and be received back again into the unconscious reality of will, where nothing is distinguishable. Life, seeing that it possesses no inherent value, is worth living only so far as it furnishes opportunity for regeneration by the extinction of self. Quietism is the acme of morality.'[1] This absorption in ultimate Being is exactly like the absorption which is advocated in the Vedānta, and further similarity may be found in the doctrine that there are various grades of this absorption. It is by the working of the reflective intellect that we institute a separation between ourselves and the ultimate being; but, as Wallace puts it, 'there are degrees in the disruptive force of the reflective intellect, and degrees in the completeness with which we can sink into a mere sense of our identity with the moving and acting spirit, if by that name we may also designate the will.'[2]

Schopenhauer shows also his kinship with the Vedānta in his disregard of time-considerations. There is no value in the distinction we make between one period and another. He crushes the centuries together as he would close a telescope. He has a contempt for history. There is no value in the progressive teaching of history, for there is no progress. No one period can teach us lessons different from any other period, and when we have studied one period we have learnt all that it is

[1] *Aspects of Pessimism*, p. 263.
[2] Wallace, *Schopenhauer*, p. 122.

necessary to learn, and all indeed that history can teach us. Things will never be different from what they are now, and from what they have been. We can learn nothing from the things of time except the necessity of getting beyond time.

Schopenhauer's denial of the value of the individual is also important as an additional evidence of his detachment from the finite world. According to him, our ethical aim must be the transcendence of the individual and the realization of the essential identity of all being. 'Every individual is transitory only as a phenomenon; but as a thing in itself is timeless, endless. He is the will which appears in all, and death destroys the illusion which separates his consciousness from that of the rest; this is immortality.'[1] We are all merged in the one great ocean of Being, or rather ultimately, as we shall see, of non-Being. As individuals we are illusions, kept only by a mistake from realizing our identity with one another. Perhaps we may see the practical effect of this theory most clearly in Schopenhauer's conception of Justice. What we call justice, in the ordinary sense of the word, is absent from the world, inasmuch as the wicked continually flourish, whereas the righteous suffer. This inequality is, however, only apparent. Those who suffer and those who escape suffering are one and the same Being, so that ultimately punishment falls where it is due. This, we may note in passing, hardly seems to be a very satisfactory doctrine. It is indeed one of the ultimate consequences of the idealistic form of Pantheism; but when the matter is put so abruptly as it is by Schopenhauer, we receive a distinct shock to our sense of fairness and consistency. We immediately object to the evil deeds of another being credited to us, especially when those evil deeds

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, p. 364.

have caused us suffering. We can hardly take up the position that we can, at one and the same time, unwillingly suffer and also be the cause of that suffering, when, if the infliction of suffering really proceeded from us, the first use we would make of our active responsibility would be to put an end to the infliction. Such a doctrine seems to be at variance with the primary facts of consciousness in regard to suffering. Neither is it consoling to be told that, when we suffer because of what we think to be another's sin, we are really suffering because of our own sin. We deny that we can be held responsible for a sin which we disapprove of, at the very moment when we disapprove of it. Such an ascription of identical responsibility seems, however, to be implied in Schopenhauer's statement that 'Eternal Justice raises itself above the individual.' But it is with the metaphysical position illustrated by the statement itself that we are at present more immediately concerned, and such a position would imply a turning away from the individual existence of the ordinary world to an extent which affords a close parallel to Eastern philosophy.

So Schopenhauer goes on in his quest for the One and All, for the reality behind phenomena which, as making up our world of ordinary consciousness, are nothing but a mass of phantoms and illusions. He finds the ultimate reality in the restless striving will, which is about as characterless as the Brahman, conceived of as the sole reality in which all living things share in so far as they have any reality at all. 'The Will is the thing in itself, and the Will as the thing in itself is free from all multiplicity.' Schopenhauer thus detaches himself from a general tendency of philosophical thought. Thinkers are usually inclined to put will in subordination to

thought, but Schopenhauer reverses this relation, and for him the will is primary. But he does not gain very much by this change. He was doubtless driven to this position by a sense of the vagueness and powerlessness and unreality attaching to a merely intellectual principle. But the ultimate Will is almost as vague. It has been said that ' it contains no principle and is subject to no law.' It is blind except in so far as ' its end is Being and the preservation of Being.' Even though it be described as Will, it is still a characterless reality that we approach as we draw nearer to the Infinite. It is not, indeed, a reality which excludes consciousness, but the consciousness which is allowed is a consciousness of a peculiar kind, utterly unlike human consciousness, and consisting in a kind of mystical penetration which is superior to distinctions of cause and effect, time and place. There is, in any case, no such consciousness as would afford a content for personality.

So we are face to face once more with the difficulty which met us in connection with Eastern philosophy. How does this finite world ever come into existence even with such a degree of reality as necessitates its denial ? The Will which is the ultimate reality is free from all multiplicity. How, then, can it contain within itself the germs of finite things ? And yet finite things are there—with sufficient reality to require denial of them. The empirical world, then, in Schopenhauer's system, as in Spinoza's, remains unconnected with the central principle ; it is introduced *a posteriori*, and so has to be left behind in meaningless confusion when we have recourse to the central reality for illumination or deliverance.

Enough has been said to show the far-reaching similarity between the teaching of Schopenhauer

and that of Eastern philosophy in at least some of its aspects, and perhaps we need not go further in the attempt to show that Schopenhauer was a Pantheist. He himself would probably refuse the name, and yet writers on philosophy unhesitatingly class him amongst the pantheists. And they have reason, for pantheistic elements are to be found in the most fundamental places in his philosophy. We have just been considering his assertion of one and only one ultimate reality apart from which there is nothing but phantoms and illusion, and we have seen also how constantly he disparages the value and freedom of the individual. For him we are all 'moments in one Mighty Being,' and, though he may refuse to call this Being God, the metaphysical position remains unchanged. He agrees with those who are formally pantheists in their monism and determinism, in their denial of any world-processes which are not the direct working of ultimate reality, in his refusal to admit any element of transcendence, or any further and absolutely real source from which deliverance from the world misery may come. The world is interpreted in terms of itself and mainly along the lines of immanence, though this interpretation may not lie on the surface. Perhaps Schopenhauer's refusal to allow the name God to the reality which underlies all things is based upon emotional rather than upon metaphysical reasons, and arises from a sense of the insolubility and hopelessness of the world problem and a lingering unwillingness to apply a name which has been consecrated by the sacred usage of the ages to a reality which, even finally, reveals itself only in repulsive and forbidding aspects. Schopenhauer's theory might be described as a Pantheism which has revealed its unsatisfactoriness to such an extent that we are unable to dignify it

by the name of Pantheism. It is Pantheism suffering from internal dissolution.

To adduce proof of the pessimism of Schopenhauer would be a superfluous task. His pessimism is deep and all-pervasive. As we have seen, he supported it by a peculiar psychological theory of desire, and the painfulness of desire finds its counterpart in the meaninglessness of the world. There is no progress but only process, and a process miserable in all its stages. 'Where did Dante take the materials for his hell from,' he asks, 'but from this our actual world? and yet he made a very proper hell of it.' [1]

It would perhaps be going too far to say that Schopenhauer's pessimism was a direct consequence of the pantheistic elements we have found in his system. To a very great extent his gloomy view of life was the result of his own intensely sensitive nature. It was very largely a pessimism of mood, rather than a philosophical pessimism. Like Rousseau, 'he was continually looking for himself in the wrong place,' and, as Fairbairn says, 'No philosophy owes more to its author's peculiar psychology.' [2] If we wish to find philosophical antecedents, we have to notice that his problem was very largely determined for him by the previous history of philosophy in Germany. It was probably the speculative tendencies of Kant which supported him in the assertion of the illusoriness of all finite existence, and he was greatly influenced also by the general tendency of the philosophy of Fichte. Still, even those who trace in greatest detail his debt to his German forerunners allow that 'his system was the result of *two* tendencies—one German the other *oriental*. The German tendency supplied his thought with its philosophical groundwork,

[1] *The World as Will and Idea*, p. 416.
[2] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 121.

but the oriental gave the impulse that built into a system of pessimism the principles he had inherited.'[1] We are not so sure but that certain elements in his philosophical *groundwork* came from the East also, and it is worthy of notice that the system of Fichte, which supplied one of the German influences working upon Schopenhauer, is strikingly similar to the system of Buddha with all its negative tendencies. Still, we need not press the point of the direct philosophical debt of Schopenhauer to the East. We may be content with the safer position that he at least found *support* for his pessimism in an abstract Pantheism such as we find in the Upanishads, and that his study of the oriental system strengthened him in his adherence to a theory of life which he had probably already derived from other sources. His pessimism led him to look upon the evil of the world as incurable, and he gladly welcomed as an ally a philosophy which practically looks upon the world-problem as insoluble.

There is one point, however, on which we should like to dwell for a little in conclusion, and it will show more fully what is meant by saying that in Schopenhauer Pantheism revealed the disruptive tendencies which are latent in it. Schopenhauer does not, after all, reach an ultimate unity. The Absolute may be described under two aspects. At one time it is the restless striving Will which he regards as the *noumenon* beyond phenomena, in the reality of which noumenon we all partake. At other times he seems to conceive of a further reality beyond this Will, a sphere of passionless existence, which we may reach by renouncing this Will which is ever striving onwards in pain. Not only must the world of ordinary experience be denied in order

[1] Fairbairn, op. cit. p. 122.

to give place to the fundamental reality of Will, but this fundamental reality—though to speak in this way seems almost like a contradiction in terms—must also be transcended. Now what is the effect of this double conception? It would seem, in the first place, that the very urging of the necessity of transcending the noumenal reality of Will is a confession of its unsatisfactoriness as a refuge from the miseries of experience. Secondly, we are denied the consolation which the Vedānta offers us of leaving behind the difficulties and problems of the finite when we enter into communion with the absolute reality. We seem to take the difficulties with us, and our sense of the failure to shake them off is expressed in the description which we give of Will, when we follow Schopenhauer's teaching. He would seem, it might be said, to translate his ethical and emotional disgust at the present state of the world into a metaphysical principle, and thus to give his pessimistic valuation of the world full and ultimate philosophical justification. Instead of escaping from distressing problems by having recourse to a reality beyond, reality is attached to the distressing problem itself. For the only reality which we can describe in positive terms is the essentially unsatisfactory entity of the striving Will. We thus seem to be driven to the position that not only is the problem of the world insoluble by us, but that it is inherently insoluble, and that its deepest meaning, if we may be allowed the paradox, is meaninglessness. If we cannot go so far as Prof. Wenley and say that 'Schopenhauer and Hartmann solace themselves with the brilliant thought of returning to the bosom of an impersonal devil,'[1] we can at least say that for them the ultimate reality is unreason. We can say, further, that in such a

[1] Cf. *Aspects of Pessimism*, p. 17.

conception we probably reach the lowest depth of pessimism, for it is a pessimism which is rooted in the very deepest conception which can be formed of the world.

Schopenhauer himself, as we have already indicated, seems to have felt that he had laid upon himself an insupportable burden of pessimism, and so he hints at the possibility of further relief to be obtained by detachment from even this reality of Will. Yet it is not a relief which can be of much value to us, for we are immediately beset by additional difficulties. The first question we ask is, How is this detachment possible? In order to bring it about we seem to require a further will, distinct from, and more powerful than, the ultimate Will. Yet where is this emancipating will to come from? Again we may ask, If we strive beyond the Will, what do we reach? Schopenhauer's answer is, 'Nothingness.' The Buddhist Nirvāna would seem to be our final refuge. Towards the end of the first volume of *The World as Will and Idea* Schopenhauer speaks of those 'in whom the Will has turned and denied itself, to whom this our world, which is so real, with all its suns and Milky Ways, is nothing,' and a little further on he tells us that 'we must banish *the dark impression* of that nothingness which we discern behind all virtue and holiness as their final goal.' From nothingness to nothingness is the journey of the soul. Could we have a deeper pessimism than this? And yet it was a pessimism in which Schopenhauer was at least encouraged by the distinctly pantheistic elements of Eastern philosophy. Unfortunately, we cannot 'banish the dark impression' which Schopenhauer's final attitude to life leaves upon our mind.

BOOK III

RECAPITULATION AND GENERALIZATION

CHAPTER I

THE UNSTABLE EQUILIBRIUM OF PANTHEISM AND THE RESULTING ACOSMISM AND NATURALISM —THE ABNORMALITY OF PANTHEISM

Our historical survey of Indian Pantheism and the few illustrations which we have adduced from Western philosophical Pantheism will, we think, have left us with the impression that the dominating tendency of Pantheism is towards pessimism. We have endeavoured to give full consideration to any signs of optimism ; but we have found, on the whole, that the optimism was either superficial, due to an insufficient recognition of the facts of life, or that, in order to maintain itself, it had to borrow support from considerations which contradicted the fundamental principles of Pantheism, as these principles would be stated even by Pantheists themselves. In the course of our historical survey, also, certain possible explanations of the prevailing pessimism have emerged. The task now remains of treating these possible reasons in a more general way, showing a little more fully their connection with the fundamental principles of Pantheism, and drawing out their universal consequences. In the concluding chapter we shall append one or two suggestions for reconstruction. This book will be to a large extent recapitulatory, but may nevertheless serve the useful purpose of focussing our ideas. The suggestions, also, will be merely additions to the indications of possible ways of escape from the difficulties of

Pantheism which have already been offered, and will be given in the course of the criticism of these difficulties.

Before proceeding to discuss characteristics of Pantheism which, in our opinion, make for pessimism, we may make a few remarks upon an idea which will recur with comparative frequency in our criticism. This idea is the idea of *abnormality*. We feel that the root of the inadequacy of Pantheism is in its failure to take a normal view of human nature and human life.

Now, to insist that any system of thought should be normal, or, conversely, to bring against it the charge of abnormality, is a somewhat dangerous proceeding. We are all inclined to be self-centred in our valuations and to regard ourselves as typical. Even those who pride themselves upon their idiosyncrasies owe their secret feeling of complacency to the belief that they represent in the fullest sense the possibilities of humanity, and that it would be for the highest advantage of the unenlightened majority if the type of behaviour set forth in the thoughts and actions of the select few were more closely observed and followed. The word ' normal,' then, may occasionally be perverted to describe any particular observer's peculiar point of view and the distinction between normal and abnormal will correspond to that well-known differentiation of orthodoxy from heterodoxy, according to which the former means, ' what I believe ' and the latter ' what the other man believes.'

It is therefore necessary to state the meaning of normality which is here adopted. By a normal system of thought we mean one which takes account of the whole of experience. It is a hypothesis which has proved its value by explaining the facts presented instead of negating them, and which so arranges these

facts according to order of importance as to give us at least the suggestion of system. A normal philosophy stands *within* experience and attempts to arrange it from within, with due regard to all its aspects. It does not so separate subject and object as to be compelled to rush to an extreme of negation of either the one or the other; it will so describe reality as to appeal to human nature in its fullness rather than merely to one aspect of it, and it will give prominence to those of our powers which seem, on the fullest consideration, to have the best claim to preference and to be potentially the best preservatives of unity. And, finally, it will provide for the future as well as for the past, for if any element of our experience can be said to be more typical than another it is surely the fact that we *look forward*. Our harp of life is never without at least *one* unbroken string of hope.

These various elements in this rough description of normality will be applied as criteria in what remains of our discussion. In the meantime we may notice that the important consideration is that a normal philosophy comes to fulfil and not to destroy. It does not willingly invert our ordinary experience. It avails itself of the working hypothesis that such experience has at least a *prima facie* case in its favour, and it claims that this working hypothesis should not be abandoned except for the most conclusive reasons. It is exceedingly reluctant to bring the charge of illusion against any of our mental activities or experiences. It is careful not to meet the difficulties of the actual by conveniently slipping aside into the world of dreams. The criterion of normality will probably turn out to be particularly searching in connection with the acosmistic form of Pantheism, but it is not necessarily confined to that phase.

The academic philosopher—and there are very many of his class amongst the Indian thinkers whose teaching we have been mainly occupied in considering—will probably protest against what he would no doubt call this rehabilitation of common sense at the expense of philosophy. He should, however, remember that common sense and philosophy are not necessarily antagonistic. Even Reid, who is often made the object of a considerable amount of scorn in Indian philosophical circles, would have pointed out, in his less rash moments, and for the benefit of those who did not misunderstand him, that it was possible and necessary to have a *philosophy* of common sense. The academic philosopher should also remember that the man in the street has claims which cannot be disregarded, and that the collective wisdom of the crowd may, on occasion, be superior even to the finely-spun theories of the cultured few. Further, may we not say that the tendency of the whole of modern thought, scientific as well as popular, is to lay emphasis upon development, to treat expansion as preferable to repression, and to find the true line of progress in the use of our faculties rather than in their abuse or destruction?

The claim which ought to be put forward on behalf of normality is clearly stated by Mr. Bradley: 'If metaphysics is to stand, it must, I think, take account of all sides of our being. I do not mean that every one of our desires must be met by a promise of particular satisfaction, for that would be absurd and impossible; but if the main tendencies of our nature do not reach consummation in the Absolute we cannot believe that we have reached perfection or truth.'[1] The same kind of claim is made by Prof. Jones in his book upon Lotze (p. 12):

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 148.

'I should say that, *prima facie*, it is a grave argument against a philosophy that it contradicts the principles which the world has found valuable in practice. In one respect, at least, common sense is truer than any philosophy, and serves as its criterion. And it is a positive achievement for a philosopher to be orthodox, provided his orthodoxy is philosophic.'

The reference to desires in the quotation from Mr. Bradley brings us again into close touch with our main subject, and leads us to remark that the question of the normality of any system of thought is not a merely speculative question. An abnormal system of thought leads to abnormal demands upon life, which, when they fail of satisfaction, produce in their turn depression and pessimism. Those who are inclined to regard extravagance as a sign of philosophical capacity would do well to reflect upon this possible practical outcome.

Carrying with us, then, this idea of normality, we may approach the first of the points we have indicated above, viz. the unstable equilibrium of Pantheism. Herbert Spencer tells us that the expression 'unstable equilibrium' is a 'phrase used in mechanics to express a balance of forces of such a kind that the interference of any further force, however minute, will destroy the arrangement previously existing.' Now it seems to us that the balance in which Pantheism leaves the interests of the subject and the object is of just such a kind as this. The smallest modicum of pressure from consideration of either logical consistency with first principles, or of experience taken merely in its first aspects, causes the balances to topple over towards either the one side or the other—towards an excessive emphasis upon the subject in acosmism or an excessive emphasis upon the object in naturalism and materialism. In the fact that so long as we are

pantheists we seem unable to avoid rushing to one or other of these extremes, we find a reason for the depressing consequences of Pantheism. Pantheism seems unable to systematize experience on the analogy of subject and object; it must either sacrifice the particularity to the unity or the unity to the particularity taken as a totality *in extenso*.

There is no need to repeat the historical proof of the assertion that Pantheism is unable to avoid the extremes of either acosmism or naturalism. We have seen indications of the truth of this in Indian philosophy, in which, though the prevailing tendency is towards acosmism, there are not wanting also signs of a naturalistic tendency according to which God will be merged in the world. The Stoic inclination was rather in the direction of naturalism, and they were saved from atheism only by unfaithfulness to their pantheistic principles. Spinoza, as we have seen, is described by one writer as having a 'mind intoxicated with the thought of unity'—so intoxicated, it would seem to be implied, as to make him altogether forgetful of the finite. Yet another writer describes his system as 'nothing else but a gross confounding of God and Nature.' In connection with Hegel the difficulty of avoiding one or other of the two extremes is illustrated by the controversy as to whether or not the Absolute is the subject of development. We have also referred to psychological and logical considerations which facilitate the passing from one extreme to the other. The urgency of the question now is as to the reason why, even granted that there is a tendency towards these extremes, we feel compelled to surrender ourselves to this tendency and are helpless to maintain a position of neutrality. Pantheists have made various attempts to establish

themselves in a middle position. We have already referred to some such attempts in discussing the relation of the term 'transcendence' to Pantheism, and we have seen that the attempts have not been particularly successful. The truth is that a rigorous application of the pantheistic principles compels us to identify God with the whole world or with none of it. If, however, we press the principle that God is *all*, and if especially we retain in our minds the idea that the only complete unity is an abstract unity excluding differences, then we are immediately landed in the extreme of acosmism. If, on the other hand, we press the principle that *all* is God, we cannot avoid the identification of the details of the world, in all their seeming incompleteness and contrariety, with God.

We have already seen (p. 43) that the Platonizing of Pantheism is illegitimate and does not save us from dangerous extremes. We may repeat in somewhat fuller form some of the objections to a Platonic interpretation which we have already hinted at. We must remember that to Platonize Pantheism, in such a way as to save us from the acosmistic extreme, would involve such characterization of God as to make Him an object of worship. To conceive of God as the home or the originator of the eternal ideas in the Platonic sense would mean that we were false to the ideal of absolute unity and annihilation of difference. After all, ideas are unintelligible except as representing the purpose or end of an individual. The very term at least seems to imply intelligence on the part of the Being who holds the ideas, and therefore we would seem to be landed here in the conception of a supreme directing mind, or even of a personal God. In short, in pursuing this line of thought, it would appear that we have entirely forgotten Śaṅkara's warning that

we must not apply objective qualities to the subject, or that we are equally forgetful of the warning of a more modern Pantheist that a consistent Pantheist must not embark upon a 'vain search for an intelligent God.'[1] Thus it would seem that to introduce the defence that, even if we deny the world, we may at least preserve the reality in God of a system of Platonic ideas, is inconsistent with the ideal of unity which abstract Pantheism sets before it. It is therefore a defence which this Pantheism cannot legitimately make use of. If to introduce differentiation into the Divine Unity is to prevent complete identification with this unity, we must be ready to face the acosmistic consequences in all their fullness. This does not, however, relieve us from the distressing impression of these consequences. It only brings us face to face with the necessity of abandoning Pantheism if we are to escape from pessimism.

The chief aim, however, of those who would Platonize Pantheism is avoidance of the other extreme of identification with the details of the world. They would indignantly repudiate the accusation that they deify the world as it at present stands, and would point out that, for them, God means not the multiplicity of the phenomenal but the system of ideas which underlies this multiplicity —the more permanent realities and meanings which are beyond the world of sense. God is not to be identified with the world which we already know, but with the true meaning of that world which is laid up in the world of ideas. Though, of course, the parallel is not complete, this distinction is closely related to that which we previously considered between the world *we know* and the world completely known, and with the procedure of identification of God with the latter but not with the former.

[1] Allanson Picton.

But, if we are to be faithful to pantheistic principles, the difficulty at once arises as to what is to be done with that portion of the world which lies beyond the ideas. The positive Pantheist is compelled to attribute some sort of reality to it, otherwise there would be no point in the distinction which he attempts to make. The details of the world which he is reluctant to identify with God would present no difficulty if they were altogether non-existent. How then, if he is to press his principle that *All is God* and if there is anything beyond the ideas, can he avoid the conclusion that this beyond must also be identified with God? Can he find refuge in the conceptions of 'degrees of reality,' or in a modified application of the category of illusion? The former conception does not seem to help us very much, if we are still to be Pantheists, for however low the degree of reality may be, it is still reality, and all reality must, in virtue of the principle, be identified with God.

Neither, as already briefly indicated, does it seem possible to make a modified use of the conception of illusion and introduce a stress upon the etymological meaning of the word 'phenomenon,' with the argument that the ideas are the only realities, whereas the particular things are merely 'phenomena' in the sense of being phantom appearances. If any permission is given to the human intellect to deal with experience as if it were reality, it is difficult to erect a barrier to its further progress in this direction and say, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.' We must remember the dictum of Bradley in a somewhat different connection, that 'The foundation of all truth is the union in all perception of thought with sense, the co-presence everywhere in all appearances of fact with ideality.'[1] We must

[1] *Appearance and Reality*, p. 379.

remember also that we are not now dealing with the illusoriness of our human experience as a whole in contrast to the abstract and undifferentiated reality of God, but, seeing that the Divine Ideas are cognizable by us and become part of our experience, we are asserting the reality of one part of our human experience while entirely denying the reality of another part. We say that we are willing to give up the reality of particular things, provided we may be allowed to retain the reality of their ideas, form, or meaning. This seems to introduce a cleavage in experience at a point where such a cleavage is inadmissible. Any theory of meaning would suggest an integral connection between ideas and that in which they are expressed. Any philosophy of art would show the same kind of connection between form and its material embodiment. An artist would indeed claim to be dealing with ideas and forms, but he would claim also that he *actually* embodied these ideas. Leaving out of account altogether the question of *adequate* embodiment, the bare fact of embodiment at all implies the reality of the material in which the embodiment takes place. If a meaning or an idea is held to be real, it cannot be expressed in that which is illusory. You may say, of course, that the material is of subordinate importance, but this is entirely different from saying that it is altogether illusory, and you cannot make this latter assertion without at the same time denying that it has afforded the means of communicating the idea to you. It may be, indeed, important to emphasize the greater importance of the idea, but this can be done only by a distinction between God and the world which is impossible for the Pantheist. The Theist may look upon God as the abode of meaning, and upon the ideas which directly and adequately express this meaning as

having greater importance than the material in which God works and which He uses for the expression of His meaning. The Pantheist tries to make the same distinction, but he can only make it by saying that the embodiment is unreal and illusory. But he is immediately met, as we have seen, by the question as to how the embodiment, if it is unreal, can be even an embodiment. To this there is no answer from a consistent Pantheist. He would seem to be shut up to the conclusion that, if All is God, and if God is embodied at all, every detail of His embodiment must be real, and must be included within the comprehensive being of God. The Pantheist cannot stop short with the Ideas. He must identify God with the world and with the whole world in all its details—with the most brilliant of architects as well as with the stones of the building in which his ideas are embodied. The whole world-process must be identified with God. Small and great things, good and bad, if they are in the world at all must be viewed as modes of manifestations of God. So we would appear to be driven, without power of resistance, to the extreme of naturalism.

Thus we see that Pantheism cannot occupy a middle position, but lands inevitably in one or other of two extremes, in neither of which, as we shall immediately proceed to show more fully, is there any consolation. We may sum up our reference to the unstable equilibrium of Pantheism by saying that it lands us in the following dilemma —God is either revealed in nature or He is not revealed there. If we say that He is revealed in nature we must accept this revelation in its completeness of detail, which acceptance would seem to land us in the extreme of naturalism. If, on the other hand, we say that God is not revealed

in nature, we must, unless we are to be faithless to our pantheistic principles and introduce a relation of God to other reality, deny altogether the reality of nature and so land ourselves in the extreme of acosmism.

We have seen that such a doctrine as this of *Acosmism* is just what might have been expected when we consider the external conditions under which it arose, whether we fix our attention upon the political tyranny of Eastern despotism or upon the oppressive social forces of mediæval Europe. A philosophy which offered a rapid release from the distressing conditions of ordinary life was readily welcomed. In the midst of a life of misery, it was comforting to know that life in general need be treated with no more seriousness than a dream when one awakes from it. If pain and evil are obtrusive factors in our experience, there is some consolation in knowing that they are nothing but the vain play of our imagination.

The mood of mind to which acosmism appeals seems to be an almost inevitable stage in philosophical development. In showing how sense-experience presses forward to a demand for an interpretation of itself, Prof. Baillie describes the phases of the emergence of the distinction between self and the not-self. He refers to the 'familiar every-day fact of the strangeness, the unpredictability, the illusiveness of the world of sense' as evidence of the view that, in early stages, the distinction just mentioned takes the form of a vague consciousness of the unreality of the not-Self. He finds here the basis of the mystical element in religion, for such an attitude consists in 'the feeling of the nothingness of the sense-world, its very variety being an indication of its inadequacy to reveal the ultimate One.

. . . Or it may seem the veil of an inner reality, i.e. its mystery and strangeness are transferred to a permanent reality which merely shines through the infinite detail of its pattern, and, because it is a mere veil, it sinks to the level of a means which loses its own terrors as such, and may be ultimately destroyed, burnt up, or, as it is put, ' rolled together like a scroll.' Further, its elusiveness and unpredictability produces such an impression upon the mind as to ' make the self-conscious individual feel himself so detached from the world of sense as to be able to withdraw from it altogether into his own inner life, and even to doubt its very existence.' [1] It is much the same mood of mind as is described in the quotation already given from Wordsworth, in which—

> The gross and visible frame of things
> Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
> Yea almost on the mind itself, and seems
> All unsubstantialized.

The motives, both inner and outer, which encourage such abstract tendencies become easily intelligible, and the process itself is exhibited as an exceedingly natural movement of the human mind. The attractiveness of such a position is at least superficially obvious. To deny the reality of the world and to affirm the sole reality of God, and of ourselves in God, seems to give us relief, especially if in the world we have not found happiness, and the mystical impulses towards absorption in the divine have acquired any strength in our nature. We have obtained a refuge from our enemies, an asylum into which they cannot come to trouble us, and which is the abode of bliss and peace, and the opportunity of communion with God.

[1] Cf *Idealistic Construction of Experience*, p. 137.

Let us see whether the abstract form of Pantheism can fulfil the promises which it here seems to make.

First of all, we may emphasize the comparison of the escape which is here offered to the method of the ostrich, which, when hard pressed by its pursuers, buries its head in the sand, and fondly imagines that there is no danger. So mystical Pantheism, when overwhelmed by the difficulties of life, simply asserts that ordinary experience is a dream and requires no more attention than a dream does when we have awakened from it. 'It disdains all troublesome facts, which are disparaged as sensuous imaginings.'[2] This would be a delightfully rapid and easy way of escape if it were possible. It seems to go to the root of the matter at once. Instead of dealing with the various difficulties of the world one by one, it takes them in the mass, and shows that they are no difficulties. Instead of lightening the burden bit by bit, instead of rising gradually 'from the small sublimities of life about us, to the great sublimities of life above,' by one mighty effort it shakes off the whole burden at once and claims to stand forth free and unimpeded.

But is the claim justified? Can we thus easily shake ourselves free? We have spoken of dreams, and of how negligible they are *when we awake*. But suppose we cannot awake—what then? Does not the very fact that we have called it a dream, and yet cannot escape from it, transform it into a horrible nightmare? We may call it illusion if we like, but yet it is an illusion which makes up our lives, with the difficulties of which we have to struggle every day, and which forms, to all intents and purposes, a great part of our reality. Further, by describing our difficulties as dreams, we have

[2] Fraser, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 84.

neglected to make preparation for them, and the result is that when we pass out of our rare philosophical ' moments ' and mix again in the actualities of life, we feel ourselves helpless. The pressure of actuality—however vigorously we may refuse to call it reality—becomes too strong for our merely speculative philosophy. We had regarded the actual as no enemy at all, and so we had neglected to raise defences against it. We had been told that no action is necessary, and now we find that, unless we act, we shall be overwhelmed. We had wished ' to be nothing, nothing,' and we suddenly discover that we are compelled to be something which we do not at all wish to be. We find ourselves still in the prison-house, and our gloom is deeper than before, because we have dreamed of freedom and awakened to find that it is *only* a dream.[1]

Nor when we turn to another aspect of this teaching and consider the refuge which we are told is open to us, is the case very much improved. We are promised identity with the One and Absolute; but it is an identity of absorption, and absorption in we know not what. The promise of such absorption may kindle in us an enthusiasm of surrender, but if we examine carefully the implications of the theory, we shall find that there is not sufficient reality left us even for making the surrender. Even apart from this, we are to surrender to a Being of whom or of which we know nothing. We are to reach what is called bliss, but it is a bliss utterly unlike anything which we include in human happiness. We are to enter into peace, which has been described as the ' peace which passeth understanding.' It may pass understanding, but it is hardly peace, unless we are to call that peace which consists in a convenient shutting of the eyes to the diffi-

[1] Cf. Bk. I. chap. xi.

culties and disturbances of the actual. It is the peace not of life, but of death.

If we are to go further in the analysis of the ideal of abstract Pantheism, we may say that it creates in us a profound sense of intellectual discouragement. We had sought for a solution of the intellectual contradictions of our ordinary experience, and had seemed to find it in a sense of the permanent beyond phenomena. But this permanent reality which we think we have reached is also beyond *description*. We can apply no positive predicates to it. It is a universal, but it has no particulars subsumed under it, and can be reached only by a denial of the particulars. It does not satisfy our craving for an intellectual ideal which shall consist in a unity subsuming under it the greatest variety of particulars. Mr. Allanson Picton describes the Ultimate Unity of the Pantheist as an 'intenser unity than any we know.' This seems to be intended to mean that no conception of organic unity will describe it, but there seems to be nothing positive signified by this somewhat vague phrase, and we are left with the impression that an 'intenser unity' is little better than a unity in which all distinctions are lost, not one in which they are conserved and explained. 'The nearer nothing, so much more sublime.' If, however, this be so, if we can reach this unity which the Pantheist offers only by sacrifice of diversity, i.e. by sacrifice of the greater part of our ordinary experience, we seem to have bought it at too great a price. We have given up for the sake of it that which never ought to have been given up. We may indeed seek to connect this unity with our ordinary experience by elaborate schemes of mythology and symbolism; but we are oppressed throughout by the haunting sense that they are *only* mythologies, *only* symbols. We have

done nothing but make sacrifices, and, when the sacrifice is complete, we make the uncomfortable discovery that the Being for whom we have made the sacrifices is dangerously like a nonentity. Philosophic thought made this discovery when it passed from the abstract idealism of the Vedānta to the nihilism of Buddha, and 'replaced the impersonal Self or Brahman by zero.' We have the same haunting sense of emptiness as a dark background to the religious rapture of the mediaeval mystic, and, as we have seen, Schopenhauer finally took refuge in an ideal of nothingness.

But there is a worse intellectual consequence than this merely negative one. When the house of the intellect is swept and garnished, very undesirable guests may enter in and take possession. We cannot permanently disregard the problems of our finite experience. When the mystical mood passes away, we are confronted by these problems again, and we have nothing to meet them with but the emptiness born of disregard. Still we *have* to deal with them, and in our unwilling return to our uncomfortable problems two tendencies may be noticed. Abstract Pantheism has always either produced *scepticism*, or opened the door to most *extravagant theories*.

To refer to scepticism here is not simply to repeat what has been said in the immediately preceding paragraphs. Scepticism is slightly different from that *disregard* of finite problems which is the immediate consequence of abstract Pantheism. Scepticism denotes a sense of inability to face the problems of the finite, coupled with the feeling that they *ought* to be faced. It is a sense that the difficulties *cannot* be disregarded, and at the same time a sense of utter inability to grapple with them. It is thus a more normal attitude of mind than

absolute indifference, but it is also a more uncomfortable one. That Pantheism of the abstract type has produced this scepticism is an undoubted historical fact, and also an exceedingly natural result. The goal of abstract Pantheism can be reached only by a distrust of our faculties, and when we wish to use these faculties again it is inevitable that this distrust should lead to the disconcerting attitude of scepticism. Moberly, in the quotation we have already given from him, points out that one who 'finds God negatively through the intellect, by disallowing in thought all the attributes of God, is saved only by his moral earnestness, and *a happy incapacity of being fully consistent* from . . . intellectual *scepticism*.' From a slightly different point of view, the stages of this process towards scepticism are described by Prof. Baillie. He shows that the universal self-consciousness may take at first such an abstract form that 'while, on the one hand, it may be made so indefinite as to be indistinguishable from nonentity, on the other hand it may be made so definite as to be indistinguishable from the very opposite of universal self-consciousness and become an attitude of mere caprice.' But this attitude of caprice is closely associated with scepticism. The individual may abstract from all forms of self-consciousness except his own. He may take upon himself the whole weight and burden of self-consciousness. 'All security and universality begin and end with his self as this individual self. But since every self not merely can, but, on this view, must, take up exactly the same attitude, there remains no point of identity or *common ground* at all for any one self-consciousness to share with another.'[1] The universal self-consciousness has been left so destitute of

[1] Cf. *The Idealistic Construction of Experience*, p. 240.

content that it cannot refuse to admit any specific content. It lies open to the incursions of every individual self-consciousness, and every individual consciousness may claim its authority for himself. The way is thus opened for doing intellectually what is right in one's own eyes, and the most lasting effect of this individual appropriation of the universal is *not* to beget a confidence in the human faculties as such. If what *I* think is truth and what *you* think is also truth, the ultimate result is a sense of the futility of all knowledge. The individual is left alone with nothing but his own thought, working uselessly in the void. He is the 'cosmic anti-patriot,' and corresponds in the realm of metaphysics to Aristotle's 'stateless men' in the realm of politics. With a more modern application we might say that the withdrawal of interest from the world leaves the way clear for the employment of merely physical and chemical theories the inadequacy of which is not felt in a world from which the deepest values have been detached. Now this sense of futility, which reveals itself in scepticism and agnosticism, is one of the deepest causes of pessimism, for, as has been said, 'At bottom pessimism in its several forms is nothing more than the statement of the practical or moral difficulty, which is formulated theoretically in that somewhat amorphous body of doctrine known as Agnosticism.' [1]

It is worth while noticing somewhat more fully the connection between an abstract universal self-consciousness and the 'attitude of mere caprice.' We have said that an abstract Pantheism throws open the human mind to most undesirable guests in the shape of extravagant theories. In the course of our historical survey the frequency with which abstract Pantheism has to fall back upon mythology

[1] Wenley, *Aspects of Pessimism.*

in order to get into touch again with the facts of ordinary experience will have been noted. Often little care is shown in examining the rationality of these mythologies, and we suppose that in the philosophic mind this carelessness may arise from the feeling that, where no real knowledge is possible, any makeshift will do.[1] But, in the course of time, and in the more ordinary mind, this cautioning fear about the inadequacy of knowledge is forgotten. The mythologies are desperately held to, not as mere makeshifts or substitutes for knowledge, but as vital truths, and we soon have abstract speculation passing over into narrow bigotry. It was in such a mental process as this that we found the explanation of the easy transition from Pantheism to polytheism in India, and here also—though we must not in this latter connection imagine the conscious substitution of makeshifts for more valid knowledge—may be the reason why mediaeval mysticism gives place so often and so easily to extravagant theory and no less extravagant practice. The human mind must have some theory or other of the universe, and when a man is told that no true theory is possible he is tempted to adopt any theory that comes to hand, without scrutinizing it very closely. But gradually, from the mere habit of keeping the theory loosely in his mind, his heart warms to it, and he feels loth to part with it. When, however, the hard facts of life and knowledge prove too strong for him, and the disillusionment comes, forcing him to abandon his theory, the sense of the emptiness of human speculation and the futility of human powers of thought comes upon him with a new and bitter keenness. They have taken away his gods and have given him nothing in their place. Frightened by abstractions, he takes refuge in

[1] Cf. Bk. I. chap. x.

mythology; but mythology can give but temporary consolation to the awakened spirit, and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

At this point, however, we may be told that we have exaggerated the hold which mythology has upon the human mind, and have, consequently, exaggerated also the depression caused by the sense of its unreliability. We may be reminded that pantheistic philosophers, at least, who introduce mythology into their systems, do so with their eyes open, and that they indicate their wide-awakeness by the distinction which they are so fond of making between two orders of knowledge—one for the philosophic and the other for the vulgar mind. But it seems to us that one danger is thus avoided only at the risk of running into another, for we find in this distinction itself another source of pessimism, or rather, perhaps, a rediscovery of the same source as we found in scepticism. This distinction between higher and lower knowledge engenders a distrust of all knowledge. In every serious situation of life, a man is compelled to ask whether the knowledge he is depending upon is merely popular or of a more reliable character, and, if in certain situations he finds, perhaps unexpectedly, that it *is* merely popular, he has the uncomfortable sense of being deluded. He may feel also that, if any knowledge may thus be merely a popular makeshift, untrustworthy at the critical moment, *all* knowledge may be of this character. And, further, to the natural distrust of human faculties, there is, in many cases, added the suspicion that those who profess to be teachers have been intentional deceivers. A feeling of helplessness, and even of hopelessness, is engendered, the product of distrust at once of human faculties and of human teachers.

Abstract Pantheism produces also a dangerous

carelessness in another direction. Emphasis upon the unknowable character of ultimate reality is apt to have a damaging effect upon the accurate—or rather the adequate—construction of professedly scientific theories. When, e.g., the doctrine of the unknowable plays so large a part in any system as in that set forth by Mr. Allanson Picton in his *Religion of the Universe*, there is a continual temptation, when difficulties arise, to bring in the unknowable as a sort of *deus ex machina* for the solution of these difficulties. It is fundamentally the same tendency as has just been referred to in connection with the distinction between two orders of knowledge, and which has already been criticized in our treatment of Indian philosophy. Mr. Picton seems in one passage to have particularly in his mind the more abstract form of Pantheism, for he uses the old Indian figure of rivers running into the sea in order to illustrate his conception of the merging of knowledge and thought in God ; and in reference to this form of Pantheism, he says that its value lies in the fact that it gives an ' apprehension of the reason why insoluble questions are and must remain insoluble, not only in this world but in any other world.' This is a little like solving questions by telling us that they are insoluble, and tempts us to acquiescence in unfinished systems and a general slackening of intellectual effort. The Absolute becomes a convenient darkness which hides all unpleasantnesses from us. To enter into darkness may be soothing for a time to those whose eyes are blinded by the glaring sunlight, but it can only be for a time. The spreading of a covering of darkness over our path would be useful only if we could afford to sit still. But we are forced to continue our journey, and our having deluded ourselves into the belief that there are no obstacles in our way will

simply make our stumbling over them more certain and more disastrous.

We may turn to further consequences of acosmism which may be described as of a more emotional character. It is a view of life which leads undoubtedly to an *evaporation of interest.* If we take up to the world the attitude which forces us to say, 'All is vanity,' we very readily and easily add, 'and vexation of spirit.' If the whole world is *māyā,* or illusion, then we are very apt to think that the sooner we are done with it the better. The world is cut off from its contact with the divine, and so loses its spiritual significance. We would fain believe that this dead world is an illusion, but we can maintain ourselves in this belief only in rare moments. We may repeat fondly to ourselves that it is *only* an illusion, but it is nevertheless an illusion which we cannot break through. Before long we are forced to turn back to the world, but we turn back to it as to something from which the virtue has gone out. Deprived of its spiritual significance, the world can attract our attention only by means of its present and most obvious characteristics. Far removed as lower utilitarian considerations might seem to be from mystical Pantheism, it is nevertheless true that one effect of it, seeing that the connection between the worldly life and a higher life is cut, is to abandon us to a utilitarian reckoning up of the pleasures and pains of the present life. And, of course, the withdrawal of interpretative factors and spiritual significance leads us to strike the balance on the side of pain. We have been told that the finite life is worthless, and so, when we come back to it, we are ready to find it worthless. The miseries of this present life may have had much to do in deepening within us the mystical mood, but it is also true that the mystical

mood deepens our pessimism with regard to the present life. One of the main thoughts of the mystic is that the miseries of the finite life should be looked upon as goads, urging us on to live the spiritual life; but the result of this is that we soon come to look upon the present world as nothing but a system of pricks. The religious virtue of absorption can be reached only by turning away from the natural. For the thorough-going mystic 'the worldly career is a continual deflection from duty.' But this stern path of unnatural duty is very hard to tread; this absolute renunciation of the natural, especially if we form a concrete picture in imagination of what we have to renounce, is very hard to make, and it is, further, a renunciation which is not permanently possible. The result is that we have to come back to the actual, and, if we come back with the mystical attitude still influencing us, we seem to be exposed as a defenceless prey to scepticism. One of the favourite themes of pessimism is the fleeting character of human life, but it is from abstract Pantheism that it has, perhaps, chiefly learnt to emphasize this theme. Pantheism of this type is continually ringing the changes upon the contrast between the permanent and the fleeting, and at the same time failing to show the relation between them. The result is that the fleeting falls apart from the permanent, and its non-permanent character becomes more painfully impressive. Men are left in the midst of a whirl of changing occurrences and can find no abiding refuge. So the present is all that is left to us, and the present is meaningless.

The situation in which we find ourselves is well described by Prof. Wenley: 'Life, if you confine it to the joys and sorrows of the present, is but a gloomy-go-round; how much more if to these fleeting triumphs the numerous incidental woes and

crosses be added. If the purpose of a thing be only its momentary existence, man's very discontent renders him but the more accursed. For the eternity that is set in his heart finds in time nothing save the empty satisfaction of despair.' [1]

Another even more practical consequence follows, which may be described by saying that Pantheism of the type we are considering leads to the *evaporation of ideals*. We have already referred to the connection between mysticism and utilitarianism, and it is even possible that hedonism of a lower and more selfish type may derive its justification from the same source. One result of emphasizing the worthlessness of human life is to encourage men in ways indicated by the saying, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.' If the divine is detached from ordinary experience there is the danger that this experience may be dealt with from a merely human, if not from a merely animal, point of view. If human life is ultimately worthless, and if, nevertheless, we have got to live it, the argument will inevitably be brought forward that those methods of action should be preferred which will give the quickest return in the way of sensuous enjoyment. Goethe, in his *Faust*, described a very natural transition when he makes his hero, after being denied by the Earth-Spirit, or the Spirit of knowledge, i.e. after being shut out from an intelligent apprehension of the finite, give himself over to a succession of sensuous enjoyments.

Yet such an abandonment of moral ideals can give us fleeting happiness only. It may lead to momentary optimism with the risk of permanent pessimism. In the play just referred to Faust is represented as finding no lasting satisfaction in his sensuous enjoyment. He can never say to the

[1] Wenley, op. cit. p. 33.

moment, 'Verweile doch, du bist so schön.' The lower life, to which exclusion from the higher life had abandoned him, leads him to nothing but a deeper gloom.

We may consider also, in this connection, the question of the attractive power of the ideal. There are those who may not have given up their moral ideal, but who are still struggling towards a higher life, and attempting to extract from the teaching of abstract Pantheism some encouragement for the battle. Are they likely to receive what they look for? The ideal which is supposed to lead them onwards is an ideal of nothingness. As Prof. Pringle-Pattison says in another connection, 'We may well withdraw our eyes from the goal if we are not to lose heart for the race.'[1] It is, indeed, an ideal which is apt to enervate rather than inspire. The end of man cannot be sought only in a negation, and a negative can never hope to win the victory over a positive. However abstract the ideal may be, the conditions under which it has to be realized are full of concrete actualities, and in the midst of this fullness the ideal is apt to be lost sight of. Men will soon cease to strive for it, and will subscribe to the ethical judgment that it is a folly to sacrifice present delights for an empty reward.

[1] Cf. *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 59.

CHAPTER II

THE ABNORMALITY OF ACOSMISM IN PARTICULAR AND A CRITICISM OF NATURALISM—THE INTELLECTUALISM OF PANTHEISM.

Before concluding our criticism of the acosmistic tendency of Pantheism we may return for a little to the idea of abnormality which is at the basis of much of our criticism of Pantheism in general, and which, we think, will be found to press severely upon the acosmistic form of it. We may repeat the warning given at the beginning of last chapter, that the demand for normality does not mean that we expect the world to satisfy any private, narrowly personal, or capricious demands. We are not disposed to attach very much weight to the subjective pessimism which arises from the failure of the world to satisfy such demands as these. There are, however, abnormal demands of a more general character which are not so much personal and capricious as *out of touch with our experience as a whole*. These demands, also, we can hardly expect the world to satisfy, and any philosophy which makes such demands is doomed to failure and is productive of pessimism. We may therefore strengthen our principle a little by giving it a negative aspect as well as a positive. We may claim not only that a satisfactory philosophy should satisfy our normal demands, but that it should refrain from making or pretending to satisfy any demands which are abnormal.

We feel that the Pantheism which leads to acosmism may be criticized from this point of view. It is continually urging us to an abnormal treatment of human nature and to a complete inversion of ordinary experience. We are invited to deal with the problems of existence by denying altogether the facts of existence. Or, at the least, what we usually call dreams and regard as contradicting the greater part of our experience we are now invited to consider as the most important part of our experience. We are forbidden to rest until we reach a reality which is altogether separate from our present experience and contact with which we can attain only by the destruction of our faculties rather than by the development of them. The goal is one of contemplative abstraction, and we can reach it only by employing a series of artificial means which are utterly opposed to the healthy working of our faculties. There is no connection between the ultimate truth which we set up as the ideal of attainment and our own nature, neither is this attainment on the lines of our self-preservation, taking self in the widest sense and dissociating it from the sinister implications of selfishness. The methods of spiritual emancipation which Indian philosophy often advises us to use and the strained attitude of the mediaeval mystic arouse in us uncomfortable feelings of suspicion as to the value of the end which they encourage us to strive after. We feel that the demand of the universe upon us is that we should be normal, and the normal tendency of human nature is to allow the fact of existence to create at least a presumption in favour of the continuance of that existence. We feel that, at any rate, very cogent arguments are necessary to induce us to oppose this tendency. We seem to be constitutionally opposed to all such theories

as aim at explaining, not the fact of existence, but how it may most surely and most rapidly cease to be. It is at least a justifiable assumption that the faculties we possess are meant to be used. Yet mystical Pantheism seems, on the contrary, to proceed on the assumption that our faculties are given us simply that we may destroy them. We are thus put out of touch with the universe in which we live, and sooner rather than later there arises in us a sense that 'the world is out of joint.' Nemesis follows rapidly on the heels of abnormal procedure.

It should be noticed how very directly mystical Pantheism is responsible for this discouragement. If God be the only reality, it follows that the fuller content a man has in his own nature, the farther he is separated from God and so the more worthless he is. As was said in a recent article on Maeterlinck, 'Almost without exception those philosophers who are conventionally known as mystics have used the gradual shadings off of our life into an impenetrable beyond as a *motif* for abusing man, insulting reason, and belittling nature.'[1] It is to be noticed, also, how utterly opposed such an attitude is to the teaching of evolution. We regard development as proceeding normally from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, and, according to this principle, we give to the more complex nature a higher place in the scale of development than that which we assign to the less complex. But negative Pantheism would reverse this procedure and would say that the more complex a man's nature is the farther is he removed from God. Further, the human mind in its ordinary procedure is disposed to regard the widening of our grasp upon experience as a test of truth and reality. As Bradley puts it, 'Not to appear at all in the series of time, not to exhibit one's nature on the field of

[1] *Hibbert Journal* (July 1911).

existence, is to be false and unreal. And to be more true and more real is to be more manifest outwardly. For the truer is always the wider. There is a fair presumption that any truth which cannot be exhibited at work is for the most part untrue.' We normally aim at the widest grasp upon experience, and any system of philosophy which despises such an aim is bound to disappoint us both theoretically and practically.

Again, we are more likely to be successful in our search after truth if we rise patiently and comprehendingly, by the diligent use of our faculties, from the facts of nature which are around us, 'from the small sublimities of life about us to the great sublimities of life above.' If we would obtain an intimate knowledge of the life of nature, it must be mainly by means of study and patient experience. Everything must come in its own order, and we should not be on the outlook for short cuts. We should not pass too readily to the idea of the Unknowable and the Infinite, despising the ordinary means which are given us of reaching our goal. We should not attempt to have experience which we have not earned, nor should we press on beyond our present acquisitions before we have fully recognized their implications and the service which they render us for our onward progress. The short cuts of intuition are full of danger—they are allied to magic and superstition. Intuition should be the crowning of our patient search and not a substitute for it. As Maeterlinck puts it: 'The thought of the Unknowable and the Infinite becomes truly salutary only when it is the unexpected recompense of the intelligence which has given itself loyally and unreservedly to the study of the finite.' Our great objection to negative Pantheism is that it does not encourage us to this loyalty, to the normal action of intelligence.

It does not encourage us to use the tools we have by us until we can obtain better ones. It allows us to throw them away too soon. In the spiritual world it permits us to rest in mystery before we have made every effort to dispel our ignorance, and so we do not touch even the fringes of that higher mystery which is the completion of the finite and not its denial.

We shall have a little more to say about negative Pantheism from the point of view of its intellectualism, but in the meantime we may pass on to a consideration of the more positive or naturalistic form of Pantheism, and we shall still carry with us the criterion of normality, paying special attention to the normal *gradation* of our human faculties.

Let us consider now, for a little, the other extreme into which Pantheism tends to fall when it is disturbed from its position of unstable equilibrium. If we identify God with the world, we may so emphasize the world aspect as to land in naturalism, mechanism, and atheism. We may find ourselves in a world from which God has disappeared and discover that we have no right even to the name of Pantheist.

We have seen that this is what has happened over and over again in the history of philosophy. In India the Vedānta philosophy was followed by the Śaṅkhya, which latter Deussen describes as an 'unscrupulous realism, leading to an abandonment of God.' In Stoicism, God, as the Soul of the world, began to be thought of in so general a way as to be swallowed up in the world. 'God was lost in Nature, and man in physical dissolution.' The naturalistic tendency of Spinoza, as shown in his strict doctrine of causality, has been commented on, and Prof. Pringle-Pattison points out how in Hegel

'the most absolute Idealism has historically transformed itself into its diametrical opposite, into the most thorough-going materialism and sensualism.'[1] We are told that Goethe united devotion to Spinoza with devotion to science treated purely from a naturalistic point of view, and he evidently found an easy transition from one object of his devotion to the other. We may notice, in passing, that the first effect of his devotion to science was to deepen the pessimistic element in his teaching. Haeckel's monism has been described as 'nothing more than thorough-going atheistic Pantheism baptized with a new name.'

In considering the fascination of Pantheism we saw that one of the secrets of the fascination lies in the support which it seems to give to the point of view of merely physical science, and Pantheism itself seems very frequently to adopt a point of view almost exactly similar to that of physical science. 'God slowly sinks into the life of nature.' The characteristic elasticity and vagueness of Pantheism affords no defence against pure mechanism. Pantheism is taken prisoner by the very ally it has come to support. We have repeatedly found that, notwithstanding its intellectualistic tendency, Pantheism has always had great difficulty in fixing its conceptions in a definite scheme of thought. It is not a simple matter to construe in thought a doctrine of universal immanence. If there is no transcendence, and if the reality of the ordinary world has been admitted, then the spiritual aspect of the identity between God and the world fails to hold its place over against the material. Pantheism turns out to be little more than 'materialism grown sentimental.' It is astonishing to find how difficult it is to keep Pantheism out of the clutches of

[1] *Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 200.

mechanical materialism. Take, as illustration, the description of the philosophy of Diderot given in a recent history of philosophy. The author describes Diderot as a Pantheist who disbelieves in freedom, immortality, and a personal God, who finds that deity is 'attested by the order of nature,' and that 'wherever truth, beauty, and goodness exist, there also God is.' In the very next paragraph he goes on to tell us that Diderot's 'view of the world was mechanical and *essentially atheistical.* In his system there was no room for divinity. The world is simply a vast machine, a musical instrument which plays of itself.' [1] There is a certain amount of fascination about the totality of materialism with its definiteness and its appeal to our primitive sense of the reality of that which we can see and touch with our bodily senses, and we need to be on our guard against its allurements even if our search is directed in the main towards a more spiritual world. We have found that much of the fascination of naturalistic Pantheism lay in the assistance it could give to the man of science in his attempt to secure an afterglow of religious faith. But the trouble is that the man of science often does not come far enough to meet his religious ally. Unless the spiritual aspect which he would fain realize has a certain definiteness and power of attraction, the claims of pure science will be apt to overwhelm him, his interest in the spiritual will change into a mood of indifference, and perhaps may change still further into antagonism, into a materialism which altogether denies the existence of the spiritual. The scientist will start with the sense-realities of his ordinary occupation, and, if he is not strongly attracted beyond these, his feeling of their inadequacy will disappear and he

[1] Cf. Alexander, *History of Philosophy*, p. 307 (italics mine).

will be in danger of failing to realize that there is a Divine beyond them. Physical science will tend to claim an entire monopoly of biological and psychological facts, and will limit its consideration to these facts. Bergson tells us that the result of a philosophical surrender of this sort will be a mechanistic conception of all nature, and he goes on to point out that henceforth a satisfactory religious conception will be impossible. All we can do will be to 'hypostatize the unity of nature, or, what comes to the same thing, the unity of science, in a being who is nothing because he does nothing, an ineffectual God who simply sums up in himself all the given; or in an eternal matter from whose womb have been poured out the properties of things and the laws of nature.' [1] We thus see that we are left with very little, in fact, with almost nothing. Religion, in the view of the positive Pantheist, may have come to sanctify the mystery of matter, but the combination has been unable to continue as a simple alliance. The religious aspect has proved to be too vague and shadowy, and naturalism, materialism, and atheism have overwhelmed it. We tend to lose our sense of the unity of nature, and we become impressed rather by its mass. We pass from intensity to extensity, and avail ourselves too readily of merely physical and mathematical categories. Our thought moves in the direction of particularity, and we cannot check this movement until it has led us into undesirable regions. Over against the congeries of particulars, linked together by mechanical causality, we are but a link in an endless chain, or a wheel in the vast complex machinery of the world. In effect we are insignificant atoms in the vast totality of nature.

We may ask, however, whether pessimism is the

[1] *Creative Evolution*, p. 207.

inevitable outcome of the purely naturalistic or scientific view of nature towards which Pantheism tends. We may be reminded of the fact that Bacon urged the claims of scientific study on the ground that it would give us lordship over nature. If we can understand nature, he argued, we may rule nature —an essentially optimistic position. But over against Bacon's view we may put the more modern view of Pfleiderer, as stated in the following passage: 'The better I know the laws of the world, the less reason I have for thinking and acting. Our contemporaries feel that vital energy is in inverse proportion to the extent and penetration of thought. It is then that they declare that pessimism is the truth.' [1]

What is the reason of this change of attitude on the part of the modern scientists? What causes of pessimism have emerged between the time of Bacon and the time of Pfleiderer? One reason may lie in the fact that in Bacon's time the scientific point of view was less differentiated. The scientist of his day did not possess so many categories for application to nature. In modern times this differentiation has taken place. Mental, biological, and mechanical categories are all potentially applicable, and the scientist may pick and choose amongst them. Unfortunately, because of their more obvious attractiveness he seems to have a preference for working with the lower categories. The world seems often to be regarded as a collection of atoms to which the highest categories cannot be applied, and the ideal of science is often the reduction of everything to mechanism. The dominant conception is that of a vast system in which man has no place of special importance. The modern scientist prefers to use the idea of *process* rather than that of *progress*, which is pretty much the same as saying

[1] *Philosophy and Development of Religion.*

that he deals with *origins* rather than with *ends*. So the level of thought is lowered. We explain the higher by the lower, rather than the lower by the higher. The world itself is a meaningless process, leading to no result. We cannot interpret it in terms of what we know best and value most in ourselves, viz. our personality, and its vastness impresses itself upon us as a dark Fate, separated from us as an alien force, which we cannot understand, but which nevertheless holds us tightly in its grasp and crushes us by its relentless might. Man is degraded from his high position and reduced to the level of dead things. Our highest characteristics as human beings are without rights in a world where pitiless mechanism reigns. We must renounce these characteristics, and take our place alongside of sticks and stones, to be whirled round with them in the never-ending revolutions of the world. The result can only be as described by Fairbairn, 'It is an instructive as well as a most serious and significant fact that the more a merely mechanical notion of nature and of man prevails, the less cheerful and less hopeful becomes the outlook on life.'[1]

We may allude here again to the idea of abnormality. The facts of the world as stated by naturalistic Pantheism do not correspond to our normal human cravings. If we are to adapt ourselves to the facts as thus described, if we are to take as our own the view of life which is here offered to us, we must be willing to sacrifice the greater and more important elements of our personality. We are told, indeed, that the sacrifice in inevitable, but the idea of its inevitableness does not comfort us in regard to it. We are as nothing over against the world. We can claim no personal

[1] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 128.

independence either now or in the future. Pain and evil are simply parts of the inevitable process in which we must acquiesce, and we are powerless to rule our own lives either for evil or for good. There is no increasing purpose revealing itself through the ages. Things could not have been other than they are, and, as they are and have been, so they will remain. The ideal and the divine are overwhelmed by the actual, and the result often is that there is neither faith in the possibility of progress nor a sense of the need of it.

> There is no God.
> Fate knows not wrath nor ruth.

We are dulled by a sense of the inevitableness of things, and perhaps sometimes we do not realize our bondage; but then—what will the awaking be?

Once more abnormality is having its revenge. Our experience taken as a whole, and the completest unity which we are able to arrive at in dealing with the multiplicity of our experience, reveal a certain gradation of our faculties. If we reverse this gradation the consequences are disastrous, both theoretically and practically. If we would keep our lives open for the inspiration of the divine, we must maintain in vigorous use those of our faculties which are at the highest end of the scale of our nature and not those which are at the lowest, verging almost on the unconscious. It is our endowments of human character and personality and spirituality which reveal our nearness to the Divine, and, unless we value these endowments at their highest, we shall lose our hold upon God. The abnormal treatment of human nature leaves us lonely in a world from which God has disappeared. Our reflection is narrowed to the contemplation of material atoms and physical forces. We can find

no place for those things which in our deepest moments we hold most valuable—the things of our mental and spiritual life. Neither, when we consider the society in which we live or the history of humanity in the ages that are past, can we discern in them the presence of the spiritual. Nature and history alike have been emptied of the Divine. Our growing knowledge has thrust us out from our Eden of communion with God, and we wander disconsolately in the waste places of the world. And, moreover, in our loneliness we are no longer able to retain the control of our own nature. By laying the greater stress upon those of our faculties which are nearest the unconsciousness of physical nature we have disturbed the hierarchy. The will is dethroned, and the interests of the spirit have to give place to a consideration of mere outward happenings. The primary impulses of our nature, which are not always moral, will now be unchecked, and selfishness and sensuality will not be far distant. The consideration of these practical consequences in the ethical sphere will occupy us more fully in the next chapter.

Before going on to consider another illustration of abnormality which is to be found in the excess of the pantheistic emphasis upon intellectualism, we may close this section with a vivid, even if unphilosophical, quotation from Mr. Chesterton, which will both recapitulate and anticipate: 'The only objection to natural religion is that somehow it becomes unnatural. A man loves nature in the morning for her innocence and amiability, and at nightfall, if he is loving her still, it is for her darkness and her cruelty. He washes at dawn in clear water, as did the wise man of the Stoics, yet somehow, at the dark end of the day, he is bathing in hot bull's blood, as did Julian the Apostate. The mere

pursuit of health always leads to something unhealthy. Physical nature must not be made the direct object of obedience; it must be enjoyed, not worshipped. Stars and mountains must not be taken too seriously. If they are, we end where the pagan nature worship ended. Because the earth is kind, we can imitate all her cruelties. Because sexuality is sane, we can all go mad about sexuality. Mere optimism had reached its insane and appropriate termination. The theory that everything was good, had become an orgy of everything that was bad.' [1]

In considering further the elements in Pantheism which may serve to explain its pessimism, we may next turn to its *excessive intellectualism*, a particular type of which has already been commented on to a considerable extent in connection with Indian philosophy. It may be objected, at this point, that there is little connection between the intellectualism of Pantheism and the question of its abnormality which we have just been discussing. In the last few paragraphs we have been criticizing naturalism on the ground that it involves an abnormal reversal of the ordinary gradation of the human faculties. Now, while still keeping the conception of abnormality as an underlying critical thought, we accuse Pantheism of being abnormal on account of the excessive importance it assigns to the intellect. Do we, then, mean to say that the intellect is the lowest of our faculties, and that the abnormality consists in putting highest what ought to be lowest? By no means. But we demand a certain amount of balance, and refuse to allow emphasis upon one aspect of human nature at the expense of other aspects. Further, we should

[1] *Orthodoxy*, p. 138.

remember what was said in the course of our criticism of Indian Pantheism. We objected that this Pantheism erred not only in being too intellectual but in not being sufficiently intellectual. In other words, while, on the one hand, it over-emphasized intellect, yet it did not use intellect in such a way as to enable it to complete itself naturally in connection with other faculties, and, therefore, the way was prepared for an unnecessarily violent reaction. It did not, on the one hand, give sufficient value to the other faculties of human nature, and, on the other hand, it allowed them to break away from the restraint of intellect which would in conjunction with them have secured both their satisfaction and its own.

The close relation between intellectualism and Pantheism has become sufficiently apparent in our historical investigation, and would seem to point to an essential connection between the two. Pantheism is the natural form of expression of an exclusive and narrow intellectualism which seeks to establish a relation of identity between ourselves and the universe (though, of course, it must also be remembered that when it is discovered that this identity cannot be *fixed* in thought, thought may, as it were, abdicate, and Pantheism may also become the vehicle of an equally exclusive emotionalism). We have seen the close relation between intellectualism and Pantheism in Indian philosophy, in the emphasis, especially, which is laid upon contemplation, and in the purely intellectual management—or, rather, discounting—of the problems of existence. The same tendency reappears in the Stoic ideal of the wise man. In the mystics of the Middle Ages, also, there is a great deal of emphasis upon intellectualism. St. Bernard identifies blessedness with the *knowledge* of God. Even if there are

signs of a belief that the intellect does not constitute the ultimate relation between the soul and God, it is yet regarded as predominant amongst the means of approach. Cf. Tauler: 'If thou wilt know from experience what such a ground truly is, thou must forsake all the manifold and gaze thereon with *the intellectual eye* alone. But wouldst thou come nearer yet, turn thine intellectual eyes right thereon, for even the intellect is beneath thee, and become One with the One—that is, unite thyself with unity.' We note here the signs of double process which we have already had occasion to notice, the dependence upon intellect and the swing towards an intenser unity which can be established only by the abandonment of intellect. But, keeping in the meantime to the first aspect, we find it further illustrated in Spinoza's well-known conception of the 'intellectual love of God,' and his treatment of evil as little more than ignorance. Hegel's system has been regarded as so exclusively logical that one of his critics, as we have seen, has been able to say of him, 'To the strength of his Logic—his mere logic —tears and blood and sins are negligible quantities.' That Pantheism, especially in its tendency towards naturalism, is helped thereto by its intellectual elements is constantly recognized in much modern philosophical writing. Dr. Inge, e.g., speaks of pure intellectualism taking the form of rationalism and tending 'to slide into naturalistic Pantheism,'[1] and another writer speaks of rationalistic systems with pantheistic tendency coming 'perilously near to what is known as determinism, fatalism, or even materialism.'[2]

We have now to consider in this and the next chapter some of the consequences of this intel-

[1] *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 156.
[2] Cf. Caldwell, *Pragmatism and Idealism*, p. 222.

lectualism. In what remains of this chapter we shall confine ourselves for the most part to certain general accompaniments of intellectualism. We may refer once more, in the first place, to what might be called an external consequence of intellectualism, viz. its exclusiveness in relation to the vast majority of the human race. As has already been pointed out at considerable length in reference to Indian philosophy, a religious view of the world which is based mainly on the intellect is possible only to a select few. It must be largely a matter of education, and education is limited in its range and accessibility. It is curious how frequently a merely intellectual view of the world results in a claim to a monopoly of divine truth. The conclusions arrived at are jealously guarded from the intrusions of the vulgar, and those who have become possessed of such teaching are apt to adopt an attitude of something like contemptuous indifference towards the generality of their fellows. We have seen many evidences of this attitude in the case of the Stoics. It is difficult, also, to see how the highest principles of Spinoza can be worked out into a care for others. His teaching is theoretically unselfish, but it does not provide any means of regeneration for those who have degenerated into actual selfishness. As has been said, 'The main difficulty in the acceptance of his teaching, from an ethical point of view, is that it is an ethic for philosophers alone. It neglects the common man, it provides no way of making him a man worth saving. The practical problems of life—how to make bad men good men, how to make the selfish unselfish, may be solved by him, but the solution is on a plane out of the sight of the common man.'[1] The effect of this narrowness upon those who are outside the

[1] Iverach, *Descartes and Spinoza*, p. 241.

privileged classes must be to make them feel that they are for ever excluded from the highest state of blessedness; and the effect upon those who are within the charmed circles of the *illuminati*—or, at least, upon the noblest souls amongst them—will be to create a feeling of depression at the thought of the many for whom the privileges they themselves enjoy are impossible.

When, again, we consider the internal disabilities of the intellect as it is exclusively relied upon and developed at the expense of the other faculties of human nature, certain additional pessimistic consequences become evident. Pure intellect has always a tendency to abstraction. It encourages us to think that the more general is the real and therefore the more important. It thus turns away our attention from the particularity of the universe and of ourselves. There is not sufficient basis for the assertion of our own individuality. All emphasis is laid upon identity, and the consequence is that we begin to regard our experience as simply the experience of God. Our thought may move in the direction of still greater abstraction. The idea of God in whom we are to be absorbed becomes, in the negative movement of thought, extremely vague, and in order to reach identity the content of human individuality is also eviscerated. We become wholly lost in the abstract intelligence of God. Or, if our thought moves rather in the direction of breadth—to use a spatial metaphor—and we still think of the experience of God and our experience as forming *one* experience, we shall have great difficulty in escaping mechanism and necessity. Our experience and that of God form as it were 'one block.' We are fixed within this block according to mathematical and physical relations. No importance is attached to the uniqueness of per-

sonality, and our connection with our universe is interpreted almost entirely quantitatively. Intellectualism lands us in pretty much the same position as mere naturalism. This point has been very well put in a recent exposition of Bergson's philosophy: 'Both naturalism and intellectualism share in the same denial of the free creative activity of the spirit, subjecting it in the one case to the laws which govern the sense world, and in the other to the laws of thought. In the one case we have mechanical and in the other case logical determinism, intellectualism reducing freedom to the mere recognition of and acquiescence in logical necessity. . . . While intellectualism frees us from the bondage of the immediately given and the bondage of sense, it commits suicide at the very point of its victory by surrendering freedom and personality as really, if not as palpably and explicitly, as naturalism.'[1] It might be said that intellectualism passes from the relation of cause and effect to the relation of ground and consequent; but, while through this transition we may gain a certain amount of regularity and completeness for our thought-constructions, we pay a heavy price for this in an even more complete detachment from concrete experience than that to which naturalism condemns us. We pass beyond the sphere of time, and are therefore deprived of all the consolation which is to be found in progress. The absolute, as has been said, has no seasons. We are condemned to perpetual analysis of the given, and can attain only to better understanding of it. We cannot hope to work any improvement upon it.

And yet the intellect which despises the co-operation of the other parts of our nature is attempting an impossible task and courting disaster. It cannot persuade us to the extreme of abstraction which

[1] Hermann, *Eucken and Bergson*, p. 26.

seems often to be its ideal. The emotions will demand satisfaction, and, if they cannot obtain it under the guidance of intellect, they will disregard its restraint and give themselves up to the play of extravagant sentiment. If the intellect refuses to take the help of the conception of human activity in its explanation of the problems of the world, it will find itself unable to deal with them and will be condemned to practical hopelessness.

In the study of Indian philosophy we have found over and over again that the emotions have not been satisfied by the abstract procedure of the intellect which the philosophical religion encourages. Yet the emotions had to be satisfied; and we found that this satisfaction came by way of reaction. The impotence of the intellect had been discovered, and so the emotions disowned it entirely. The understanding had not brought the worshippers into contact with any object by which their affections could be held, and so they dispensed with the control of the object altogether and allowed their imagination to guide their emotions in any wayward direction. From a Pantheism which is based on the abstractions of the intellect the pendulum swings over to a crude, emotional variety of Pantheism, in which religion becomes a mood and its only criterion is intensity. But in such a religion of feeling there is no permanent security for the human soul. For moods of exaltation we have to pay heavily and frequently by moods of depression, and, after repeated experience of this alternation, even the moods of exaltation are darkened by the consciousness that soon they will have to give place to their opposite. In order to avoid this reaction we require that the intellect which is at the basis of Pantheism should abandon its pretensions to exclusive action and should so transform itself that the constructions

which it evolves should be of a character to allow of a natural outgoing of our emotions towards them.

And the inadequacy of mere intellectualism would seem to be even more clearly shown when we consider the consequences of a neglect of the active powers of humanity. In the midst of our efforts after abstraction we become aware of the 'induration' of the things of the external world, and also, we might say, of our own selves. We cannot feel that we are nothing, or even that we are merely stains upon the radiance of eternity. Illusion can be proved merely on paper. In real life we have to go back to a real world, and in this world we have to act, if we are to deal at all satisfactorily with its problems. But any exclusive attention to intellectual relations brings about a deadening or depression of the more active elements. We soon reach a condition of passivity and quietism. This passive attitude to life may produce a temporary complacency, but, as we have repeatedly seen, the complacency can be temporary only. We shall deal with the general pantheistic attitude to evil in the next chapter, but, in the meantime and in illustration of our argument that the intellect is comparatively impotent when it tries to act alone, we may notice the predicament of the intellect in view of the problem of evil. It finds itself immediately in a disconcerting dilemma—for its evil must be either real or not-real. The facts of life and the moral consciousness make acceptance of the latter alternative impossible for us. So we are shut up to the former alternative, and in face of it our temporary quietism passes into a feeling of helplessness. The practical problem is imperatively demanding solution, and we have none to give. From the intellect alone we cannot derive power sufficient to combat evil. The abstract intellect confines itself to the

'conceptualized experience of the past,' or it shuts itself within the charmed circle of the given, devoting itself to perpetual analysis and re-analysis without power to move forward. Seeing that our experience forms one experience with that of God, any action there may be is devoted to clarifying the relations existing within this one experience as an already definite totality, and there is no power to reform or improve. As for ourselves, in the problems of our individual life, mere ideas are feeble forces, if indeed they can, from the point of view of the isolated intellect, be conceived as forces at all. And, on the other hand, the forces of the evil which no amount of theory will enable us to negate are strong. As a matter of fact, the only satisfactory position in regard to evil is one which does not shut us up to the alternative that evil is either real or not-real, but one which allows us to say that evil is both real and not-real. It is real in the sense of requiring to be fought against; it is not-real in the sense of being a not-inconquerable factor in life. A merely static view of reality, which is all that abstract metaphysics can give us, condemns us to hopelessness in that it disregards progress and is contemptuous of time. It is only the assertion of the power of our will that can make us secure and hopeful, giving us an ineradicable sense of the reality of movement and a confidence of its efficacy in the sphere of morality.

Another point might also be mentioned. Intellectualism leads to an unrelieved isolation of the burden of evil. True to the requirements of the intellect, we generalize in regard to evil as well as in regard to other things. But this abstraction of evil, this viewing it in its totality, leads us to magnify it. When its incidence upon our practical life is felt while we are under the dominance of the

intellect merely, we tend to look on evil as an actual mass of opposition which has to be got out of the way *as a whole*. Action, on the other hand, as actually engaged in, has reference to the particular. It leads us to look on evil in its concrete setting, i.e. it leads us to deal with this evil and that evil, just at the point where removal or transformation is possible. The subjective effect of this is cheerful. When we consider an evil in its concrete setting there are many chances to one that we may find some relieving element in it or in its surroundings. In any case, we are approaching it with the consciousness of energy in general and definite dealing with it in particular. We have the thought at the back of our minds that we may be able, by our action, to lessen the evil. The result of this particular hopefulness will be to increase the optimism of our general mood. It has been often said that ' thought widens and enervates, whereas action narrows and strengthens.' It would seem, from what has been said, that the mere width of vision which thought brings is not sufficient to compensate us for the enervation which it also undoubtedly brings. It is a vision which is superficially wide at the expense of depth of penetration. It can maintain us in a comfortable mood only so long as we fail to see or shut our eyes to the problems which lie immediately below the surface. If the soul has thoroughly deluded itself into the belief that there are no problems, the consequences may be limited to enervation; but if, as must happen sooner or later, the speculative mood passes away, enervation gives place to despair. It is such a journey of the soul which William James is describing when he tells us that ' too much questioning and too little active responsibility lead . . . to the edge of the abyss at the bottom of which lie pessimism and the nightmare

and suicidal view of life.'[1] Those who live in a country such as India, in which abstract thought is carried to such an extent as to become almost a disease, will feel the truth of these words.

Thus it would seem that thought can give us relief only if it enters into alliance with action. This alliance is necessary for action as well as for thought. Mere impulsive action, action for immediate consequences, such as sometimes the extreme pragmatists would seem to approve of, is of no permanent value. It must be action controlled by thought, and such alliance and control is possible. But the thought which is to enter into alliance with action and thereby illumine our life must not be merely abstract thought. It must be thought which is to find its consummation in the establishment of a wealth of complex and concrete determinations rather than in a generalization which evacuates the concrete of meaning. It must be a thought which realizes that we do not live to think, but that we think to live. Thought is to be instrumental in order that thought may itself become more adequate. We are 'trustees for the universe,' and we can fulfil our trust only through appreciation of the wealth of meaning that is in the world and only through service of the causes of humanity. The thought which has thus become transformed through its alliance with action will no longer be content with a world-view which minimizes the importance alike of our individuality and of the world we live in. It will no longer be content with a unity 'of one piece.' In so far as it is so content, i.e. in so far as it remains pantheistic, it condemns us to hopelessness and pessimism. In so far as thought realizes its own potentialities, it stretches out towards the assistance of the other factors of human nature, and

[1] *Will to Believe*, p. 31.

brings us to a world-view containing the elements of hope. But such thought is no longer satisfied with Pantheism. It is normal thought, entering into the unity of human nature and experience. The thought upon which Pantheism is based is abnormal thought, detaching itself from its natural allies, and thus condemning itself to narrowness in the exercise of even its own immediate activities. And it is because it is based upon narrow and exclusive thought that Pantheism is, of necessity, connected with pessimism.

CHAPTER III

THE PANTHEISTIC TREATMENT OF SUFFERING, EVIL, AND FREEDOM

A THEORY of life must stand or fall, must submit to judgment as to its optimistic or pessimistic effect, according to its treatment of these practical problems of life. During our historical survey, and in the course of the last two chapters, we have already touched upon the nature of the pantheistic attitude in relation to these questions. We may here attempt to put together and treat in a more general way some of the conclusions which we have already reached in connection with the particular pantheistic philosophies, and we may draw out a little more fully some of the consequences which we have been analysing in the last two chapters.

The connection of Pantheism with intellectualism in particular will lead us to expect a certain hardness and rigidity of treatment. The tendency of abstract Pantheism will be to hold itself aloof from any disconcerting experiences of ordinary life and to adopt an attitude of indifference. Such things as pain and suffering, evil and sin are really rather beneath the notice of the wise man. Or, if the inclination of his thought is more positive, he will yet apply to the world the rigidity of mathematical categories or the stern necessity of logical demonstration, and the elements in question, while admitted to be real, will be treated as disconcerting only for the average intellect. The philosopher, with his

more penetrating vision, will perceive that they are inevitable, and so will find consolation.

In its treatment of the problems of pain and suffering, for example, Pantheism has recourse readily and easily to the ideas of indifference and acquiescence. Pain is to be negated by a subjective process whereby we may render ourselves altogether unaffected by it. For this, his characteristic attitude, the Pantheist supplies two motives: (1) the finite world, in which pain comes to us, is the realm of illusion, and therefore pain itself, as contained in this world, must be regarded as an illusion. (2) The world in which we live is under the sway of fixed, inexorable laws; whatever they ordain simply *must be*, and there is no escape. Every experience which comes to us has its definite place in the total system, and therefore, if within this system pain should come to us, it must be regarded as inevitable. Perhaps, indeed, if we could with understanding accept this fact and see the place in the whole of what we usually call pain, we should cease to interpret it as painful. The inevitableness of pain, i.e., might in the long run cause us to regard pain as an illusion. But whether this consequence follows or not, we must in any case accept the inevitable, and in this acceptance lies our peace.

Before going on to consider more fully this double attitude to pain and the relief—or supposed relief—which it brings, we may notice that all pantheistic solutions in this relation have reference to the present and not to the future life. A very favourite way of explaining pain, in popular religious thought at least, is by reference to a future state of bliss to which this present life of suffering forms but a preliminary stage, and in which the intensity of the bliss will more than compensate for the misery

of the present. Pantheism, however, seeing that it can afford no basis for a belief in the continuance of the individual life, is excluded from the use of such an argument. Probably also, it would disdain to use it even if such an argument were available, and in this disdain would be supported by a good deal of modern opinion. 'Other-worldliness' is out of fashion, probably because of the grossly hedonistic and calculating elements which have crept into the descriptions of this future state. Also the emphasis at present tends to be laid upon quality of life rather than upon the quantity or length of life. Thus it might be argued in certain quarters that the exclusion from Pantheism of solutions of the problem of pain drawn from the continuance of individual life is not a very serious disability. We think, however, as will be shown later, that Pantheism is here deprived of a very considerable relief, and a relief which is quite admissible when divested of its materialistic, hedonistic, and calculating elements. At present, however, we may confine ourselves to the incidence of pain in the present life, and consider the pantheistic solutions usually offered.

Before we criticize more minutely the double motive just referred to, we may remark generally that the attitude of indifference includes in itself a practical judgment of pessimism. It amounts just to leaving a problem alone in its insolubility, and declaring that our highest satisfaction is to be found in admitting this insolubility. But this is the same as granting that the world is ultimately meaningless, and, to say the least, such a position can never be a secure basis of optimism.

But let us turn now to the motives supplied in order to bring us to this state of indifference and acquiescence, and the reasons which are brought

forward for its justification. We are to be indifferent because the world in which pain is found is the world of illusion. This is the solution of the problem of pain, which was chiefly favoured, as we have seen, by the Indian Pantheist, and no doubt it has an appearance of spiritual fascination about it. It supplies us, theoretically at least, with a glorious independence of the disagreeable facts of life. But *will it work*? Will it enable us to deal satisfactorily with even the simplest forms of our own bodily agony, and does it enable us to take up a normal human attitude towards the pain of those whom we love? Would it, e.g., satisfy us, as we stood by the bedside of a friend suffering agonizing pain, to have no better consolation to offer him than the suggestion that the pain he is suffering is entirely an illusion? We do not think that any but the most callous would, in such circumstances, be willing to accept this doctrine of pain—*as a working theory*.

There is a further objection. Not only does the theory we are considering fail to supply us with an adequate explanation of sorrow and pain, but it turns sorrow which might, in the absence of such theory, be bearable into a pessimism which is unbearable. When we analyse the most common sorrows of men, we find that they are ultimately based upon a sense of value, and are immediately caused by the temporary absence or damage of the person or things considered valuable. But the explanation of sorrow which is here given to us really leads to a greater sorrow still; it encourages in us a mood of mind in which all sense of value is lost, and the spiritual deadness which succeeds is the deepest depth of grief. It is such a distinction between sorrow and pessimism that Chesterton hints at in his recent book on Charles Dickens: 'Sorrow and pessimism are, in a sense, opposite

things, since sorrow is founded on the value of something, and pessimism on the value of nothing.' This pessimism which is, then, deeper than sorrow, is, it seems to me, only the exceedingly natural result of the theory which, by attempting to explain sorrow by illusion, thereby eviscerates human life of all value.

Can we find any greater comfort in the doctrine of the *inevitableness* of suffering, and in the advice given to us to cultivate a mood of absolute submission to the forces and laws of nature? This was the solution of the problem chiefly favoured by the Stoics, and Matthew Arnold has reproduced the spirit of it, to a certain extent, in his 'Empedocles on Etna.' The source of man's unhappiness is that he has no rights over against the universe, whereas he believes that he has such rights.

> What makes thee struggle and rave?
> Why are men ill at ease?
> 'Tis that the lot they have
> Fails their own will to please.
> For man would make no murmuring, were his will obeyed.

But Nature is inexorable, and makes no differences. The good and the evil alike receive the same treatment at her hands:

> Streams will not curb their pride
> The just man not to entomb,
> Nor lightnings go aside
> To give his virtues room,
> Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.[1]

[1] Cf. a French presentation of the same thought:

> Le pauvre en sa cabane, où le chaume le couvre
> Est sujet à ses lois,
> Et le garde qui veille aux barrières de Louvre
> N'en defend point nos rois.
>
> De murmurer contre elle et perdre patience
> Il est mal à propos,
> Vouloir ce que Dieu veut est la seule science
> Que nous met en repos.

A man must take the fate that comes to him, and cease from grumbling. In acquiescence lies his peace. Those who advocate such a view as this, indeed, tell us for our comfort that what we call pain is simply due to our inadequate comprehension of things. If we could but gain, they say, a proper view of the whole vast system of nature, we would understand and be willing to endure our pain for the sake of this system. We do not know that there is lasting comfort in this view. Even if we grant, for a moment, that pain is necessary for the good of the whole, this does not seem adequately to console the individual. For him the prick and sting of pain still remain, however much the whole may be benefited. And can we be satisfied with an ideal which consists simply in the perfection of the whole, and does not include the perfection or at least perfectibility of the parts as well? Our normal demand cannot be satisfied except by victory over pain in the individual life.

Even if this explanation of pain by regarding it as necessary for the good of the whole were satisfactory in itself, it is not an explanation which is possible for Pantheism. Pantheism, and especially the more naturalistic form of it, can allow, as we have seen, only *process* and not *progress*. How, then, can there be any good of the whole by which a *rationale* of pain might be supplied? Suffering in connection with *progress* might acquire 'sacrificial dignity,' but in connection with *process* merely it can be nothing but an intolerable burden. The process is, in itself, unmeaning, and whatever we endure in connection with it becomes unmeaning also. Now suffering without meaning in it fills us with a sense of injustice, and our souls revolt within us. Pantheism cannot persuade us to acquiesce in individual suffering for the good of the whole, until it can fill

that *whole* with meaning, with purpose, with *progress*, instead of merely *process*. But Pantheism cannot do this. It cannot tell us to bow ourselves before the will of God; it simply counsels us to submit to the processes of a relentless Fate. We may suffer gladly for the sake of the good that is to be, but we suffer *gloomily* for the sake of a futile process, which has no sooner completed one of its cycles than it begins again on the same meaningless round. It should be noticed that a comforting solution of the problem of pain cannot be content merely with compensation. It is not sufficient to show that the present stage of suffering will be followed by a state of happiness even within the individual life. We demand an integral connection between the suffering and the good that is to be. The present painful condition must be represented as essentially a preparation for the future good. This necessary relation can, however, be exhibited only in connection with progress and purpose. Otherwise the pain is placed in our mental construction simply alongside of the good, and is not relieved by the good. Our natural human confidence in the prevalence of the good may even turn into a cause of pessimism, if the concomitance of good and pain is recognized and yet their integral connection is not shown. Without introducing the idea of progress, it would be for the empirical consciousness simply a case of so much more good, so much more pain. But, on the other hand, the burden is greatly lightened if we can see that the pain contributes to the good, and to good which persists and does not merely in its turn give place to the condition of pain.

Our conclusion, then, is that neither by indifference nor by drilling oneself to the conception of the inevitable can a satisfactory solution of pain

be arrived at, and yet these are the only solutions which Pantheism is able to indicate.

The pantheistic treatment of the problem of evil is in many ways similar to its treatment of the problem of pain. Evil is regarded as an illusion or as inevitable. The tendency of Eastern Pantheism is to regard evil as illusory. Though it may be a somewhat exaggerated statement to say that 'in primitive Oriental Pantheism all is equally divine,'[1] it is probably true enough to say that in the more typical forms of Eastern Pantheism all is equally indifferent. The distinctions between right and wrong are equated in an undifferenced Absolute. The same tendency reappears in mediaeval mysticism, which Dr. Inge regards as issuing historically in antinomianism. Some phases of Hegel's philosophy would also give encouragement to this view, especially when he is inclined to regard all stages as illusory except the last, i.e. when he would teach us that all stages where we see imperfection and predicate evil are to be regarded as unreal, and that we do not touch reality until we reach the absolutely final stage of development.

Now, at first sight it might seem that here we have got a point of view from which we can arrive only at optimistic conclusions. If evil may be negated, so much the better; we have no real enemy to contend against, and so may remain at peace. But the worst of it is that Pantheism of this type is apt to deny the good as well as the evil. The denial of evil is bound up with the denial of the reality of all our finite experience, and the claims of consistency demand that this denial should be thorough-going. Instead, therefore, of leading to a faith in the ultimate victory of the good, it leads to an obliterа-

[1] Cf. Inge, *Studies in English Mystics*, p. 176.

tion of the distinction between good and evil. Many pantheistic writers have not the slightest hesitation in drawing this inference. We come across, e.g., such a statement as this in the Upanishads: 'The perfect sage, so long as he lives, may do good or evil as he chooses, and incur no stain—such is the efficiency of a knowledge of the self.' But if, in order to get rid of evil, we have to get rid of good as well, are we not paying too big a price? Are we not apt to land in quietism, if not in antinomianism? In any case, the denial of the good seems to encourage a mood of moral hopelessness and despair. If the good is unreal, what have we to live for—why should we strive for it? Is not the destruction of the ideal complete? For, as has been said, 'It is idle to propose to be moral, on the understanding that morality is only relatively binding, a mere passing phase of the human, or rather of the absolute spirit. Such morality is immorality.' When, further, we are face to face with the facts of life, we are unable to persist in this negation of evil. It is found, after all, to be a powerful enemy, before whose attacks we are helpless and unprepared. We had refused to consider it an enemy at all, and we suddenly find that it is ready to overwhelm us.

With the more modern Pantheist the illusoriness of the facts of evil is, perhaps, not so popular a conception. He is usually willing to admit that the facts which we call evil exist, but he challenges our interpretation of them. He tells us that our calling these facts evil is simply due to our inadequate knowledge of them. Spinoza, e.g., as has been said, 'held evil to be a thing natural; vice to be something not to be condemned, but to be explained. . . . The optimism of Spinoza was due to his inability to regard vice as voluntary, wrong as optional.

All was part of a necessary system, and justified by its necessity.' The conception of evil is based upon a too near and partial view of a picture. If we go close to a picture and look at only one part of it, we seem to see nothing but blotches of paint. Looked at from a proper distance, however, these blotches are no longer ugly, but contribute their share to the perfection and beauty of the whole. Evil is but an ingredient in good—it is a lesser good. The same attitude is revealed also in the more positive teaching of Hegel. He can, as we have seen, make no room for that which 'ought not to be.'

This is a theory of evil which can be justly regarded as the logical outcome of Pantheism. For from Pantheism, with its repeated assertion of the equal divinity of all things actual, it is impossible to get an adequate basis for the distinction between good and evil which lies at the heart of ethics. It engenders a facile optimism in regard to the universe and every part of it which effectively excludes the condemnation both of ourselves and others which is implied in the notion of evil and of sin. A mood of softness steals over us, which, when translated from the realm of feeling to that of action, produces 'an uncertainty of touch as regards evil.' When to this is added an assertion of essential identity between ourselves and God so that God becomes responsible for every action of ours, then the consciousness of responsibility to which the sense of sin is relative altogether disappears. A true sense of evil means that *I* am conscious of an experience which is essentially mine, for which *I* am responsible and the responsibility for which I cannot transfer to the universe in which I find myself. But, if we so identify ourselves with the universe as to give up our independence of action, if we reach 'an all-containing absolute to whom

everything in the phenomenal world in some real sense belongs, we really seem to have got to the end of everything—of all real goodness, morality, and religion at any rate.' [1]

It should be noticed that this weakening of ethical distinctions is a consequence of all systems of Pantheism, however fully rationalized they may be. Logical oneness and necessity is no less destructive of ethical distinctions than natural necessity. Wherever experience is regarded as forming 'one block,' whether we interpret it in terms of idealistic or scientific phraseology, a new conception of good is rendered necessary. Good is no longer that which struggles against the evil in order to overcome it. If we still use the word 'good,' we find that what we used to call evil is bound up along with it. 'The old good is,' as has been said, 'neutralized through the complicity of evil. This is undoubtedly the case with every interpretation of the Absolute's goodness that idealism has formulated. Good and evil are united in a new conception of value, the very essence of which is its implication of both good and evil. . . . Now, assuming that it is possible to formulate such a conception, it is certainly impossible to call it good without equivocation. For that term will continue to suggest what is now construed as one of its partial aspects. And the new conception appears to be a solution of the original problem *only because of this suggestion.* It seems to suggest a victory of good over evil, whereas it really asserts only a perpetual and doubtful battle between the two, giving a certain *fixity and finality to the very situation from which it promised deliverance.*' [2]

Now, if we neglect the warnings given in this quotation, the commingling of good and evil and

[1] Walker, *Christian Theism and a Spiritual Monism*, p. 196.
[2] *Hibbert Journal*, April 1910 (italics mine)

the calling of the whole good, would seem likely to produce a comfortable mood of mind. If we can regard evil as only a lesser element in a total good, we need not worry over it, but may wait patiently until we can call the whole good with even less hesitation than at present. If, further, we can regard ourselves as simply playing the part we are destined to play, we can disclaim all responsibility for the acts of our lives usually described as evil, and can thus get rid of all uncomfortable pricks of conscience. And it may be asked, Is not this just the attitude we should desire? Does not this shaking off of the sense of sin contribute very materially to our peace of mind? This may be so for the slothful souls, for those who are willing to 'give a lethargic acquiescence in the natural order, a lazy assent to that law of passivity and inaction which fixes the spirit in the furrows of convention, mediocrity and torpor'[1]; but those in whom the moral consciousness is properly awake, who are on their guard against juggling with old ethical terms to make them fit a new situation (respectfully labelled 'scientific') will not find permanent solace in such an attitude. Spinoza, overpowered by rationalism, could, e.g., say that the action of a Nero from the point of view of the universe was not a crime. But are we willing, in view of the facts of life and history, to admit this? Are we willing to put a Caesar Borgia on a level with the Christ, or even the worst of our present-day acquaintances on a level with the best?

From the depth of our souls we revolt against such a demand. Whatever evil may be in relation to the whole, *our* conscience accuses *us* of guilt in relation to it. As Lotze says: 'The very definition of the moral consciousness is the conscious-

[1] Hermann, *Eucken and Bergson*, p. 51.

ness of a contrast which cannot be set aside or transcended. . . . Evil is no ingredient of good. By denying the real evilness of evil you evade the burden of the mystery, but you also forfeit the blessedness of good and the hope of salvation.'

This suggests an instructive comparison between the doctrine of Pantheism regarding evil and the Christian doctrine of forgiveness. The latter doctrine is often erroneously described as if it consisted simply in calling evil good, and treating it as if it were really good. This is, of course, a mistake. The Christian doctrine of forgiveness fully recognizes the evilness of evil, and becomes a doctrine of *forgiveness* only in so far as it offers a means of escape from a real enemy. It meets the conscious need of those who have realized the futility of explaining evil and badness as mere deficiency of good or as merely relative, and who refuse to think that 'though we call evil painful it will in the eyes of God be in perfect accord with the harmonious plan of the world.'[1] For finite beings often the harmony remains concealed, or they are even conscious of having broken it, and to them it must be revealed, for them it must be restored. Into the grounds on which Christianity bases its promises we cannot here enter, but it is instructive to notice the inadequacy of Pantheism when brought face to face with the need of humanity. If Pantheism fails to convince us that evil is simply a lesser good—and we think even the slightest attention to the details of our moral consciousness will show us that it must so fail—what further relief has it to offer us? We go back to it with the conviction lurking in our minds that evil is really evil, and all the satisfaction that Pantheism can give us is to tell us that it is nevertheless inevitable. What is, had to be.

[1] Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 139.

Can we be satisfied with this at the time when we are keenly aware of the evilness of evil? We do not think so. But, if we are not satisfied, then scientific Pantheism shuts us up to a judgment of pessimism. The 'ought-to-be' to which, notwithstanding all logical and scientific arguments, our consciousness still bears witness, confronts the 'is'; and as in our pantheistic theory there is no place for the 'ought-to-be,' the 'is' holds the field. But, if we are not in the depths of our soul satisfied with the 'is,' we have then to admit that what ought not to be nevertheless *is*, and cannot but be. In face of this inevitable we are helpless and in despair. The Eastern Pantheist, with his doctrine of negation, is really more logical than the modern scientific Pantheist. He at least offers a redemption, not certainly the Christian redemption, but a redemption of escape. We may escape evil by escaping from life. 'The great redeemer is the death-bringer and not the life-bringer, the quencher and not the quickener. Redemption is destruction of consciousness. It does not open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, but the gate of death to all victims.' [1]

Yet this greater honesty of the Eastern philosopher in drawing out his conclusions to their bitter end only serves to set in clearer light the pessimism regarding evil which he shares with the modern scientific Pantheist and with all those who fail to find a place in their philosophy for a moral ideal.

The constant recurrence of the idea of inevitableness leads us to emphasize another idea closely connected with Pantheism, and that is its *Determinism*. The individual is helpless in the grasp

[1] Forsyth, 'The Pessimism of Thomas Hardy,' *London Quarterly Review*, July 1912.

of the whole, he is part of a process, and has no freedom or independent initiative. Pantheists all down through the ages have made the doctrine of determinism a fundamental article in their creed. The Pantheism of the East has been described as determinism through and through. The Stoics are continually harping upon the thought of the insignificance of man. For Spinoza freedom is nothing but an adequate understanding of the completeness of our bondage. For the modern scientist, man is often as much a part of the material order as anything to which we usually give the name of 'inanimate object,' and, even if he speaks in the language of idealism, the bondage is equally complete.

It is unnecessary to labour this point further. We may simply gather together some ideas as to its subjective effect upon us.

It is to a certain extent comforting to know that everything is done for us, and that we do not need to trouble ourselves. We may rest in such ideas in our lazy, acquiescent moods, and may continue in such moods for a considerable length of time, provided circumstances are favourable. But if circumstances are unfavourable, what then? Are we still willing to acquiesce in the theory that we can do nothing to deliver ourselves from the oppression of these adverse circumstances? Are we willing simply to go on enduring? And not only may our circumstances at the present time be unsatisfactory; we may also be conscious of how far our character falls below our ideal, and how it is condemned by other people. But, if this is so, are we satisfied to go on being evil, without any possibility of repentance or improvement? Is our nature fixed for evermore?

It would seem that if we are consistent Pantheists, and therefore determinists, we should have

to answer these questions in the affirmative, and the result is to leave us with the feeling that we are powerless in the grasp of a dark Fate. This is but the outward aspect of our subjective feeling of helplessness born of the consciousness that, if our circumstances are bad, we can do nothing except acquiesce.

It is true that Pantheists often seek to escape from these conclusions, and inculcate the necessity of moral reformation. They realize that our relations to the whole are not all that they might be, and they seek to stimulate us to improve these relations. The more religiously minded amongst them urge us to abandon our mistaken independence and submit to the universal rule of Nature.

But apart from their failure to explain how, on these premises, we have ever come to take up such an independent position, they utterly fail to explain how, having once taken it up, we can get out of it again by any act of *our* will. How can we ever realize that it is our business even to make the attempt? Earnestness is relative to human freedom. But on this view we are only centres to which the force of the universe is distributed and from which it acts. If the relations between us and the universe are unsatisfactory, we, at any rate, cannot change them, and it is useless for the Pantheist to pretend that we can. We have seen that the logical outcome of this type of Pantheism is to deprive us of this power, and the Pantheist cannot take away the rights of our individuality with one hand and give them back with the other. To speak to us, as Mr. Allanson Picton does, of the 'appeal' to us of some whole of which we form a part seems very like a misuse of language. If we are consistent Pantheists we must just accept the consequences of our Pantheism, however gloomy these may be. To deny us the

rights of personality leaves us untroubled only so long as we do not feel the urgent need of possessing and exercising these rights; but when the need arises, to feel that we cannot meet that need is a cause of pessimism. In being deprived of personality we are deprived also, not only of that which is necessary, but of that which is most valuable, which we often make the standard of value and even the test of reality. To be robbed of such an important asset of humanity is to be robbed of many of the joys of life.

We have seen that the net result of Vedāntic abstraction is also deterministic. It may be said that the Vedāntist, while looking upon the whole of finite experience as a realm where natural causation reigns, yet looks upon this realm as altogether an illusion. A rapid method would thus appear to be provided whereby the soul may gain freedom from natural chains; may emancipate itself by understanding the illusory character of experience. But what is the value of the freedom which is thus obtained? It is not a freedom with any content in it, but an abstract blank nonentity. It is certainly not freedom to act; it is, at the best, but freedom *from* action. And, further, it is not freedom which the individual may look upon as his own possession, for, with the gaining of freedom, he loses his own individuality. His Ātman is absorbed in the universal spirit, or Brahman; he thus gains nothing in the way of freedom—nothing at all except the extinction of his own personality, in relation to which alone the freedom had any worth. When ordinary experience asserts its actuality once more, he falls back easily into its bondage. Abstract idealism is despised, and degenerates into a rigorous naturalism. The attitude of the disappointed Pantheist with idealistic tenden-

cies becomes one of silent acquiescence, a patient endurance of ills which cannot be cured. Dr. Inge has pointed out that most mystical philosophers have been determinists, and have suffered from the sense of failure which is the inevitable outcome of a creed which places its entire dependence on inactive contemplation.

And, as has been frequently pointed out, when the modern Pantheist has recourse to a philosophy of the Absolute, when, abandoning exclusive reliance upon negation, he posits reality in the form of a system of ideas, held together in the unity of a single consciousness, he does not thereby escape determinism. Neither in naturalism nor in modern absolutism is there any centre of personal force, from which and by which the whole may be modified. It matters not, therefore, in which set of terms we describe the whole, its rigidity and machine-like character will remain. We have already referred to this point in our treatment of the intellectualism of Pantheism. If, recognizing, perhaps more quickly than the Eastern philosopher, the futility of thinking the world away, we still attempt merely to think of it as the thought of the *one* Mind, there is little gained for the freedom of the individual. His lot is pretty much the same as it would have been in a materialistically conceived universe. The name has been changed, and that is all.

The subjective effect of this determinism is, of course, the denial of responsibility which is evidenced, as pointed out in last chapter, in a weakening of the consciousness of sin. Another closely connected consequence, already alluded to, is the destruction of a faith in progress whether in ourselves or in the world. The past lays its grip upon us, and, as we have been, so we shall continue to be. If we have done evil we shall continue to do evil. If the world

is evil, so it will continue to be. To this denial of progress, especially as it affects our attitude to the movement of the world, we shall now turn, and bring together a few of the ideas which our historical survey may have suggested.

CHAPTER IV

THE PANTHEISTIC DENIAL OF PROGRESS, PERSONALITY, AND IMMORTALITY

Even if the individual is to remain undismayed by the denial to him of subjective freedom, he would receive from the pantheistic creed no objective encouragement to put forth effort for the improvement of humanity or of the world as a whole. The consistent Pantheist would have to tell him that the progress of the world is both unnecessary and impossible.

We arrive easily at such a position when we start from the presuppositions of Oriental Pantheism. The world is in itself worthless—a hopeless welter of unmeaning confusion. We can regard it only as something to flee from, not something which may be improved. It is to be noted that the six means of improvement mentioned in the Vedānta are—*tranquillity*, *control*, *renunciation*, *patient endurance*, *concentration*, *faith ;* and there is, generally speaking, no call to vigorous action. The modern followers of Eastern Pantheism do not hesitate to draw pretty much the same practical conclusion : Swami Vivekānanda, e.g., in his *Karma-Yoga*, as we have seen, tells us we need not trouble about trying to do good to the world. 'The world will get on beautifully well without us,' and whatever we do will make no difference. When we awake from a dream, all the strenuous work which we have gone through

in the course of the dream is seen to have made no difference, to have produced no result. So will it be when we awake from the dream of life—the efforts we have put forth will, one and all, appear to be futile. It is not worth while to attempt to improve the world, because really there is no world to improve. We may allow the confusion of sense-impressions, which we *call* the world, to go on just as it has been going, and need give ourselves no concern about it. The doing of good works can be at best but a moral gymnastic, leading to valueless ends, making our escape from the world easier, but producing no effect upon the world.

This is colossal indifference, but can we maintain ourselves in it? Even if it be granted that life is a dream, we have yet to live within that dream. If the dream is an evil one, and we are nevertheless told that it will never be improved, this is not a particularly comforting thought. Eastern Pantheism might be called the philosophy of unprogressiveness, and it finds expression in a civilization which 'does not move onwards, but returns upon itself from age to age.' It is a satisfying creed only so long as we can admit that progress is unnecessary; but, if we are forced to give up this position, all it can tell us is that progress is impossible. We cannot unite the two ideas of the necessity and the impossibility of progress without becoming pessimists.

There is, further, something utterly depressing about the idea of good works being simply a sort of spiritual gymnastic exercises without result upon the world in which they are done. Hartmann, amongst modern pessimists, seems to have adopted this idea, and his doing so is an additional evidence of the congruence of the idea with pessimism. Prof. Wenley says, in reference to him: 'Hartmann pre-

tends that activity has a value all its own, because it is helping towards the realization of an ideal. But he tells us that the ideal is nothingness. In his premises Hartmann cannot do more than show that life is a *treadmill*. It is simply a continuous process. It is absurd to declare that the harmonious conception of life towards which man continually reaches forth is a blank unity, and at the same time to allege that this is a satisfactory explanation of growth in moral excellence. . . . To assume that moral life is imbued with a principle of advance, and at the same time to deny the absolute value of that life is a contradiction in terms.'[1] The Eastern Pantheist and the mediaeval mystic, when landed in an uncomfortable predicament by the conjunction of the feeling of the necessity of progress and a denial of its possibility, may try to save themselves by saying that the very misery of the world which they so readily grant may act as a stimulus to moral effort. But we think that moral effort cannot be sustained simply by a desire to escape *from*. It must have something to escape *to*, some promise in the future.

Let us turn now to the more naturalistic phase of Pantheism, and see if we can discover here any fuller admission of the possibility of progress. We may approach the question by means of a quotation which has reference to one aspect of Hegel's philosophy. Dr. Macintosh, in his criticism of Hegel, says: 'The Finite is the necessary unfolding of the Infinite—inadequate, therefore, and unreal in detail, *sub specie temporis*, but necessarily adequate and real in the totality of its phases, *sub specie aeternitatis*.'[2] It is in the failure of the Pantheist to keep to this distinction that the main source of

[1] Wenley, *Aspects of Pessimism*, p. 322.
[2] *Hegel and Hegelianism*, p. 283.

difficulty lies. The naturalistic phase of Pantheism attempts to grasp the details of the world in one comprehensive whole, but soon the attitude which is proper to the whole comes to be taken up towards the details—in relation to which it is improper, and indicates a 'premature synthesis.' Following this line of thought, we are a little apt to view the details also *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is, to view the various stages of the world process as altogether necessary, altogether divine. And as we are unable to divest ourselves of moral categories, this soon comes to mean that we regard these details as also perfect, or at least as seeming to require greater perfection only because of our inadequate understanding of them. This consequence is deducible from the current Hegelian formula that the 'actual is the rational and the real the ideal,' and it involves a deification of the *status quo*, an assertion that whatever *is*, is right. In this way all customs, however oppressive in certain of their influences, may be justified. We have simply to say of them that they have to be, that the fact of existence is also their warrant for existing. Such a theory gives us no standpoint from which we may criticize the actual, and we are therefore shut up to an acceptance of the actual. Some people fall back on sheer submission and sitting still. 'Nature is going to do something some day, nobody knows what and nobody knows when. We have no reason for acting, and no reason for not acting. If anything happens, it is right; if anything is prevented, it is wrong.'[1]

More popular Pantheism, or the Pantheism which is current amongst ordinary scientists, leads also to the double assertion of the divinity and inevitableness of the actual, but perhaps greater emphasis is laid upon the second part of the double assertion.

[1] Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. 191.

Naturalistic Pantheism, indeed, suffers the fate of all philosophies which attempt to explain the world in terms of itself. It can believe in *process*, not in *progress*. Nothing can be learnt from history for our future guidance. History is a record of what was and could not but be, and the future will simply be a record of what has to be. By the action and reaction of material atoms everything is explained, and the world is regarded not as reaching forward to any goal, but simply as going on. In Charles Kingsley's novel *Hypatia* the heroine puts the inevitable questions: 'What if the stream of fate were the only real power? What if there were no centre, no order, no rest, no goal, but only a perpetual flux, a down-rushing change? And before her dizzying brain and heart arose that awful vision of Lucretius, of the homeless universe falling, falling, falling, for ever from nowhere towards no whither, through the unending ages, by causeless and unceasing gravitation, while the changes and efforts of all mortal things were but the jostling of the dust atoms amid the everlasting storm.'

The point of view of naturalistic Pantheism has undergone little practical change since the days of Lucretius. We have the same purposeless universe going through its unmeaning processes in a never-ending series of cycles, and when one cycle is finished another begins.

We cannot see that the effect of this general exclusion of progress and purpose from the world can be anything else than depressing and an unmistakable source of pessimism. It is perhaps in relation to this conception of merely cyclic process that the pessimistic tendency reveals itself most clearly. The conception is borrowed from naturalism, and it produces in us a sense of utter futility. There is no experience of our daily life more depressing

than to go through with a long piece of work and to find at the end that it has all to be done over again. And yet this is the way in which the cyclic Pantheist would have us look at the world. Surely there is a close connection between this conception and a gloomy view of life. If things simply come into existence and depart again, and no progress is made and nothing is produced, then life becomes comparable to painful constrained movement on a treadmill. And the feeling grows upon us that, if nothing is accomplished, then life is good for nothing. Recent writers have emphasized the liking of science for this conception of cycles, and have urged us to face the subjective consequences and to cease deluding ourselves with the idea that such a view of life can bring us any comfort. In an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, e.g., we come across the following description of the situation: 'Now, it may be that the doctrine of blind cycles is true, that the last word of science is indeed uttered. It may be that the monstrosity is real; but, if it be so, let us at least be spared the Epic, the emotion. To venerate inanity because it is indestructible, a machine because it is huge, a motion because it is perpetual, to abase oneself before chaos because of its senseless repetitions—this is an incubus too galling. The Hindu with his similar (or identical ?) doctrine of the eternal inbreathings and outbreathings of the spirit of Brahm, the everlasting succession of meaningless creation and meaningless destruction, is at all events consistently and patiently pessimistic; comprehending the naked destitution of his philosophy, he comports himself within its proprieties. Have we no right to expect equal grace of science ?' [1]

If this is indeed the only view of the cosmos which science has to offer, it would be as well not to con-

[1] Oct. 1910. Art. 'Religion and Progress.'

ceal its pessimistic consequences, for a realization of them might move us to a consideration of the question whether a scientific point of view is inadequate to the facts of our experience. And, perhaps, we shall be urged all the more strongly to this consideration when we take note of the attempts frequently made to bring history within the sweep of this cyclic conception. Lord Morley, e.g., seems to think that history naturally tends in this direction of the denial of progress. Cf. *Compromise* : 'The historical spirit has led to a certain denial of progress in modern times. Instead of combating evils, we are content if we explain them.' On the other hand, there are not wanting protests against the merely naturalistic view of history. Eucken, e.g., would detach history from the conception of evolution, which latter term he seems to confine simply to a necessary unfolding of the given. For him the notions of history and evolution, thus interpreted, are mutually exclusive. 'Where there is evolution there is no real history, and where there is history there is no evolution.' [1] In truth it would seem as if a mechanical view of history were a degradation of the facts of human life to the level of the facts of inanimate nature, and in this degradation, this abnormality, once more, we find an explanation of the accompanying pessimism. It is when we thus, under the influence of naturalistic Pantheism, forget the difference between the soul of man and the rest of nature, that we are tempted to think that human nature and human society are alike incapable of improvement and that the present and future are altogether in the grasp of the past. If the past were allowed to press upon us only to the extent of making us realize the great difficulty of progress, then such

[1] *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 163.

pressure would do us good service and would nerve us to earnestness. But when, as is the case in relation to this conception of cyclic process, the past is so viewed as to render the conception of progress impossible, then the effect produced is decidedly pessimistic. We ourselves and the human race of which we form a part are simply compelled to do over again what we have done before, and in such a conception there is neither joy nor hope.

Again, we are dealing with a result of a narrow intellectualism which accepts the universe as given, and, however intolerable it may find the given, cannot of itself supply the motive to reformation. And yet, if in face of a distressing actual situation we wish to regain our cheerfulness, it can only be through a belief in the possibility of creating something new and better out of the past with which we are dissatisfied. It is by means of action that we may obtain light upon a darkness which the mere intellect cannot penetrate, and, if this action is not permitted, the darkness is unrelieved. But the denial of progress is the denial of action, for action is essentially purpose, and purpose is unintelligible except as an effort to rise from a lower level of existence to a higher. If, however, there are no differences of level—and in Pantheism, with its equal divinity of all things, there can be no such differences—then purpose is condemned to remain a mere ineffective wish, incapable of realization. This, however, means that we are shut out from what Eucken calls ' the only proposition which can take upon itself the guidance of the whole of life, viz. the idea that movement is a sure and constant ascent.' [1] It will surely be admitted that we can attain a measure of comfort in our life-struggle only if we are permitted to form a moral ideal. The denial of progress,

[1] *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 163.

however, makes a moral ideal impossible of formation, and for this reason the denial of progress condemns us to pessimism. The failure to find a satisfactory basis for a moral ideal in naturalistic Pantheism strengthens the feeling of subjective bondage which its determinism produces in us. We feel that, even if we had freedom, the world affords us no place for that ideal towards which we would direct our free effort, that better which our souls cannot but imagine and love. Notwithstanding all their naturalism, most Pantheists would admit that a satisfactory life cannot be lived without such moral ideals, and they attempt to find a place for them in their systems. Mr. Picton, e.g., acknowledges the need of such ideals. He speaks of a selfishness and arbitrary self-will in relation to which we may be quite sure that we are thinking and feeling in a manner ' quite out of harmony with what we know to be the true relations of the finite to the infinite.' We need not stop to inquire how, from Mr. Picton's point of view, the exercise of any arbitrary self-will is possible. We need only notice that there is here an unmistakable testimony to a better state than the existing state—in other words, to an ideal through the operation of which the disharmony will be rectified. But when he proceeds to formulate his ideal on a naturalistic basis, Mr. Picton immediately finds himself in difficulties. He himself describes his ideal as simply ' a focussing on the horizon of the future of the tendencies we discern in the present.' But surely such a description is a falsification of the very notion of the ideal. To focus the present on the future means simply to assert that the present is eminently desirable. It involves conservatism of the most rigorous type, and a most indulgent consideration of the existing institutions of society and even of our own personal

habits and general attitude to life. It involves a virtual deification of the present, and also of the past of which the present is the inevitable outcome. But surely an ideal, if it is to be worthy of the name, must imply a rectification of the past and an improvement upon the present.

Further, Mr. Picton's use of the word 'tendencies' carries with it another contradiction of the usual significance of an ideal. It seems to imply that the ideal is just that which will inevitably come to pass. Now, we indeed demand that the ideal should be something which *may* come to pass, but we do not demand that it should be something which *must* come to pass. If we take this latter view of it, it ceases to be our ideal. A moral ideal is something for the realization of which we feel ourselves responsible, and which we also feel *may not* come to pass if we shirk our responsibility. If it is something which we *must* move towards it is not our *ideal*, it is our *destiny*. The idea of inevitableness and the moral ideal cannot live together in one consciousness. Mr. Picton himself seems to be a little afraid that the ideal as described by him may not have much value or force. He tells us that 'the universe is not a process, but a sum of processes, all *balanced in one eternal peace*. Yet that need not in the least diminish our interest in the process in which we happen to be born.' [1] It may not diminish our *interest*—though even this is exceedingly doubtful—but it will most certainly diminish our energy. How can we put forth our full strength in order to help on a process which will, in any case, go on perfectly well without us?

The truth is that, despite all attempts to find room for it, a moral ideal is out of place in Pantheism. Pantheism can be consistent only if it is willing to

[1] *Religion of the Universe*, p. 145.

deify the actual present state of things, and on no other condition. In his definition of the ideal Mr. Picton is much more consistent with Pantheism than with the notion of the ideal. As has been said, 'True Pantheism takes the universe as it is, in its infinity, regards it as without beginning or end, and worships it.' Whatever is, is right, is the only consistent formula of the Pantheist. If the whole universe is God, all the parts and processes of it are also divine. If at any moment we take a cross-section of these processes, we must admit that the state of things we find is just what ought to be. In any case, it *had* to be, and we need not waste our breath in attempting to criticize it.

But, says the naturalistic Pantheist, even granting that this is the result of our theory, where is the harm? Is it not a very comfortable state of things, to be 'untroubled by a spark'? Does it not bring contentment and peace of soul? If we are 'finite clods' it may, but *not* if we are human beings, face to face with intellectual and practical difficulties. Before we acquiesce in the pantheistic position we must realize what the giving up of progress and the possibility of a moral ideal means. It means, first of all, that we give up one of our most satisfactory explanations of pain. We cannot, e.g., explain physical suffering by regarding it as a factor in moral training. Suffering becomes simply inevitable, and sacrifice is not voluntary but necessary. But, as Prof. Bruce says, 'The mere inevitableness of sacrifice is not the last word. We cannot rest until we have got an answer to the question, *Cui bono?*'

Further, we are left helpless in face of our practical difficulties, especially when we are attempting to deal with the evil conditions of other lives as well as our own. The tendencies of Pantheism just referred to may be all very well for those who are

fortunate or fairly moral at the present moment, but do they represent a theory which we can go to the world with—the down-trodden, fallen world, the world which, even Hegel allowed, produces when taken in 'cross section' an inevitable impression of misery? Can you with any conscience say to the unfortunate and the sinful, 'You are *where* you must be, you are *what* you must be, and there is no need and no possibility of improvement as far as you are concerned'? Would not such words sound as a hollow mockery? Another quotation from *Hypatia* will emphasize our meaning. 'The philosopher had no gospel, then, for the harlot?—no word for the sinner, the degraded? Destiny, forsooth! She was to follow her destiny, and be base, miserable, and self-condemned. She was to crush the voice of conscience and reason, as often as it awoke within her, and compel herself to believe that she was bound to be that which she knew herself bound not to be.'

It is here that the selfishness of Pantheism becomes apparent. It pretends to be unselfish, in that it professes to care nothing for the individual continuance of the self. But in another sense it is extremely selfish. It tempts us to say to our fellow-men, 'You have got your lot in life, and I have got mine. Do *you* be content with your lot, however much worse than mine it may be.'

This doctrine of ultra-conservatism means a shutting of our eyes to the miseries of the world, and is ultimately revolting to our moral consciousness. The world needs an evangel, and Pantheism cannot become evangelistic without contradicting itself. Lotze says, 'Pessimistic thinkers concede everything which *can be theoretically* established as to the single all-embracing Power, but they deny the right to transform the notion of this power into a

god by adding thereto the predicate of goodness. They see in the course of the world nothing but the blind development of an original ground or principle, which, far from setting itself the task of realizing what is joyful, is rather conscious in the individual spirits of its unhappiness, and leaves nothing for them but the wish for their own annihilation.'[1] The word *pantheistic* might very well be substituted for the word *pessimistic* in this quotation, and then the first part of it would become a description of the attitude of naturalistic Pantheism to the world-process, and the second part of it a description of the effect produced by this Pantheism when offered as a consolation to the miserable and the down-trodden. The only objection to making the change of word is, perhaps, that Pantheism may not explicitly deny the goodness of God, and indeed makes formal use of the conception of God. But the practical result is not in any way altered. The predicate of divinity seems often a mockery of the actual sorrows of men, and if, in protest against this undue dignifying of the actual, a man should refer to his own misery, the Pantheist would simply tell him that it is no misery at all, and that this would be intelligible if the sufferer would only take a broad-minded view of the facts.

Chesterton, in his book on Charles Dickens, p. 6, says: 'The optimist is a far better reformer than the pessimist, and the man who believes life to be excellent is the man who alters it most. The pessimist can be enraged at evil, but only the optimist can be surprised by it.' The value of this quotation lies in the indication which it gives of the close connection between the recognition of the inevitableness of evil or suffering and pessimism. The pessimist is one who can only 'rage' and who has no

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 149.

such faith in the possibility of progress as will encourage him to make efforts for the removal of it.

In truth, we are back again at our old dilemma. We can be optimists only by being content with the actual, or by being given the chance of improving the actual. If the facts of history and of present experience, as well as the witness of the moral consciousness, destroy our contentment, and if we are at the same time denied the possibility of improvement, we seem to be shut up to pessimism. If we feel the weight of the sorrow of the world, and are at the same time forbidden to lighten the load, the burden becomes intolerable. It is only in possible progress that we find a *rationale* of suffering, and for our permanent peace and comfort of mind we must be permitted to believe that ' evil, whatever its nature, has an end.' Our only salvation lies in at once realizing the strength of our foe, and at the same time feeling that the laws of the universe will allow us to grapple with it, that there is possibility of victory through the strength and the freedom that is granted to us.

The discussion in which we have been engaged both in this and in preceding chapters has revealed the fact that Pantheism essentially involves a depreciation of personality, the natural outcome of which, as regards the future, is, of course, a denial of immortality. This depreciation of personality is clearly evident in the ease with which Pantheism passes to one or other of the two extremes of acosmism or naturalism. It is still more evidently connected with the intellectualistic character of Pantheism, with its assertion of a logical and universal self, reached through a sublime indifference to the question whether it is possible for the finite selves thus to be sublimated into the universal. The

important point is that, theoretically at least, they are so gathered into the universal that their personality is lost. So long as we confine ourselves to mere knowledge it is impossible to give value to individuality. It is an 'accident and an anomaly.' And naturalistic Pantheism arrives at the same result. If man is simply a fragment of nature, related merely mathematically and physically to the whole, then individuality loses all value, and becomes little more, as has been said, than 'a blunder of existence.' The defects we have found in pantheistic morality, its slightness of distinction between things evil and things good, its determinism and denial of responsibility, its conservatism, all concentrate in this depreciation of personality. We cannot feel the value of our own souls if we do not realize the difference between good and evil, if we have no consciousness of effective activity; and again it is because we do not feel and assert the value of our own souls that we assent so easily, under the guidance of Pantheism, to the doctrines of ethical indifference, determinism, and conservatism—with all their pessimistic consequences.

The question has now to be asked whether this sacrifice of personality is in itself a good or evil thing. Are we giving up just what we ought to give up, or are we making a surrender which ought not to be made? Can the surrender be expected to bring us peace and joy, to heighten our optimism rather than deepen our pessimism? We may consider the question briefly both in reference to our present life and to the hope of immortality.

Of course, if we have thoroughly learned our pantheistic lesson, and have schooled ourselves into the realization of the utter worthlessness of individual life, then this surrender will be only the abandonment of a grievous burden, and will bring us a

promise of relief. The mere *ending* of what is thoroughly bad is certainly better than its continuance; but it should be noticed that in this kind of surrender we have simply the repetition in the practical sphere of a theoretical judgment of pessimism to the effect that the individual life is not worth having. We have not here a positive relief which can be regarded as an optimistic asset: we have only a reaffirmation of pessimism. Yet this argument for the surrender of personality, based upon the worthlessness of personality, is the only one which is logically open to Pantheism, even though the peace which it promises is the peace of death and not of life. Practically it comes to this—that there is nothing to surrender and therefore we may well surrender it. Still, there are other arguments, more positive though less logical, which seem to rest on the assumption that the surrender of personality will produce a higher blessedness. Personality seems to be a defect and a limitation, a hindrance to our fullest life. Those who use such arguments as to the unity of our life with the universal do not pause sufficiently to reflect that, if our good is already part of the universal good, or if —more simply—we are already parts of a whole, there can be no question of the surrender of one to the other. Surrender implies distinction from the whole of that which is to be surrendered, and of some one to make the surrender, and is illogical if these distinctions are denied. But, passing over this point, we may notice that the argument for surrender on the ground that this will bring about the greater good really borrows its strength from the similarity between this demand and the demands of the most lofty ethics according to which we are appealed to to give up our own private interests for the sake of the community or the race as a whole.

There is, however, a distinction here which should not be lightly passed over. It is assumed by Pantheists who argue in this manner that all considerations of self are necessarily selfish considerations. We have seen this confusion repeatedly in the writings of Vivekānanda and other Eastern Pantheists, and it reappears in much modern protesting against a narrowly individualistic point of view. A recent critic points out that Meredith, e.g., fails to realize the distinction between selfishness and personality as a whole, and seems to think that 'any relation into which the "I" enters is a relation which may be termed selfish.'[1] This identification of selfishness and personality is, however, far from being a necessary one, and the condemnation of the one should not lead us to the condemnation of the other. It is further becoming increasingly obvious that social advance can be most surely brought about by an expansion of the powers which lie nearest to us, the powers, that is, of what we usually call our personality. A conception of society which is rising slightly above the merely organic is serving to show that the perfection of the whole of society cannot be secured apart from the perfection and utmost expansion of the parts. We are beginning to realize that the perfection of the social whole cannot reach its goal unless it is regarded as a means to the perfection of personality. Rising higher still in our conceptions, we understand that even the Absolute would not be what it is apart from the elements which make up the personalities of human beings.

The conclusion, then, to which we come is that the sacrifice of personality to which Pantheism summons us in the interests of the higher and fuller life really defeats its own end. The abuses would

[1] Sclater, *Meredith*, p. 39.

not be abolished, the tyrants would not be overthrown, were it not for the consciousness of personal energy and the exercise of it. And the wider life for which we yearn is one which has room within its spaciousness for the personalities of those who seek to contribute to it. We die, indeed, as selfish individuals, but it is in order that we may live as persons, and unless Pantheism is willing—if it can—to adopt this belief, the mere surrender to the whole which it advocates cannot bring us to blessedness.

It is difficult to discuss this question of the ultimate effects of the depreciation of personality without introducing the consideration of immortality and the pantheistic attitude to it. What we have just been saying may be set in clearer light if we extend the period of time over which the surrender of the individual soul is to be made and view it as the surrender of the hope of immortality. With a short reference to this problem our analysis of some of the most general reasons for pantheistic pessimism may be brought to a close.

It is obvious that if personality is a limitation and a defect—'a blunder of existence'—then the soul will long to be freed from it. It will court absorption in the infinite, and any creed which promises such absorption will be a welcome one. It is such an ideal of absorption and abandonment of personal life which the Eastern Pantheist has for the most part set before him, and Western Pantheists, both ancient and modern, have exhibited the same attitude of lofty disregard for personal continuance or have even expressed aversion from any such prospect. For them, as has been said, 'the prospect of immortality is a threat rather than a hope, and the idea is welcome that individuality has a final term.'[1]

[1] Galloway, *Religious Development*, p. 342.

We may compare Strauss's inexpressibly pessimistic saying, 'The last enemy to be destroyed is not death, but the hope of immortality.' These writers, and others like them, are ready and more than ready for the sacrifice of the individual life upon the altar of humanity.

There is much that is admirable in ideas such as these. They seem to show a lofty indifference to the concerns of our individual life. They seem to describe an attitude which is the only possible alternative to selfishness, or, at least, they owe much of their attractiveness to the degree of their divergence from selfishness. They represent, in closer reference to immortality, a most justifiable opposition to that sickly and sentimental other-worldliness which, through excessive attention to the harps and golden gates of the future, produces nothing but petulance and inactivity in the present —a mood of mind which St. Paul might have been supposed to have destroyed effectually in the first century, but which, even in the nineteenth century, served to call forth the scorn of Matthew Arnold. In contrast to such a mood of mind the idea of absorption in the universal might well seem to be the possible inspiration of unselfish and high-minded activity, moving us, through the withdrawal of selfish prospects, to the more effective discharge of the present duties of unselfishness. It will lead us to care little for the permanence of our own interests or our own reputation. We shall have the high carelessness and the freedom of one who is —

> Of his fame forgetful, so his frame
> Should share in Nature's immortality.

Such an attitude has certainly a great degree of grandeur and sublimity. It can give us at least

temporary inspiration, and seems to break down the narrow limits of individuality and bring us into contact with infinite life. It may give us relief, in prospect, from present woes or may kindle in us the real rapture of a higher life. But, again, we have to ask the question whether the promise is justified, whether in relation to this doctrine in particular the tendency of Pantheism is towards optimism or pessimism.

Here, as in the case of present surrender, we may distinguish two phases of the service which this denial of immortality may be supposed to render us—it may give us relief from present troubles, or it may promise us a higher and fuller life in a future of impersonal existence, and, through the influence of that prospect, a moralizing and spiritualizing of our present life.

Now the comfort to be drawn from the thought of the annihilation of that which is unendurable is at best but a sorry one, and, as we have just seen, can hardly be produced as an optimistic asset in favour of Pantheism. To argue in this way would be to urge that Pantheism is non-pessimistic because it confesses that life is so bad as to be incapable of improvement even in the future. If, in view of the sorrows of life, all we can do is to seek for the repose of the tomb, we surely confess that, in our opinion, these sorrows are irremediable, and the denial of immortality becomes, in this connection, not a new source of comfort, but simply a restatement of our pessimistic conclusions. We can hardly get out of the difficulty here by saying that misery which comes to an end is at least better than misery which endures for ever, and that, in drawing this conclusion, we may be finding a source of comfort. We are not inclined to say that a source of comfort can always be found here, and, in any case, there is

no introduction of a positive element. Even if the pessimism may be slightly diminished, there is nothing which in this relation will bring Pantheism across the division-line which separates pessimism from optimism, nothing which will even bring it within sight of this dividing-line.

Let us turn, then, to the more positive promise which Pantheism brings us by means of this denial —the promise of a higher and a fuller life, with effect upon the present. It is difficult to prove the point that, as Holbach teaches, ' the idea of immortality is mischievous, in so far as it withdraws human interest from the present world,' or that, more positively, the denial of immortality will lead to increasing activity and to activity of a more unselfish type in the present. We have already referred to a possible danger in this connection in our discussion of the evaporation of ideals. If the life of the individual leads to nothing in the future, he is apt to take up an attitude of indifference even at the present time. Why should he trouble either about himself or about other people ? In a few years he will be as nothing. ' The bird of time has but a little way to fly.' Why should we not make the most of the present ? So the way is prepared for the degradation of our life. We may be tempted to abandon nobility for sensuality, and the patient visionary quest for the quick, tangible return. Why, moreover, in this attention to near results, should we ever trouble to look over the boundaries of our own little life-enclosures and take an interest in the concerns of other people ? So, let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die. This is a creed which the modern Pantheist, however severely he may—and does—discountenance it, can hardly theoretically condemn.

We do not claim that the ' fear of hell ' is necessary

in order to keep wretches in order, or that, contrariwise, the popular idea of future reward and profit is an essential stimulus to morality. Those who fail to distinguish between selfishness and personality as a whole are always ready to connect the two ideas of immortality and selfishness. We cannot see that there is any necessary connection. We allow that the ideal of external rewards is certainly not the highest ideal, but we claim that, even when a man has got far beyond the desire for the fruit of works in the selfish sense, there is yet within him and within all men an ineradicable and quite justifiable desire for the continuance of his personality.

We are beginning also to take such a view of the universe that we feel that this calls for the continued life of the personal beings who constitute it. While at the present day it is certainly the fashion to distinguish quality of life from quantity, and to lay the greater stress upon the former, yet we cannot, at our present stage, afford to dispense with quantity. We are still creatures of time, and we tend to formulate our judgments of value in terms of quantity. Popular speech identifies value with that which will last, and popular speech may not be so far from hitting the mark here. A shopkeeper, in asking a high price for his goods, attempts to justify himself by saying that the articles will last, and most people would admit that his argument indicates an important element of value. We are much inclined to estimate the value of anything by its duration, and personal life is no exception to the rule. A theory which diminishes the continuance is felt also to diminish the value of personality. It is depressing to our sense of our own worth and of the worth of everything which is the outcome of our activity. Our life here is not an impersonal

thing, and if the personality in which it centres is declared to be ultimately illusory or is so diminished in worth as it certainly is by the denial of immortality, our zest of life passes away and is replaced by dull, unenthusiastic conformity to routine. There need not be in the demand for continuance a craving for any materialistic reward. We desire nothing more than the 'wages of going on.' Our minds may be occupied by the thought of contribution rather than of claim, but we demand the continuing opportunity of making that contribution, and the sustaining hope that, if in the last resort our contribution cannot be separated from ourselves, but consists rather in what we are than in what we have, this gift of our personality may be assigned a place of permanence and of honour.

There is indeed much that is attractive in the ideal of absorption in deity, and the attraction is heightened by the use of such phrases as Spinoza's 'intellectual love of God.' It is by no means certain that Spinoza used such a phrase in reference to anything more than the permanence of true ideas, and those who still use it probably mean little more by it when the question as to their precise meaning is pressed home upon them. Thus it is illegitimate to deduce from such a phrase anything which may reconcile us to the idea of absorption. Such an attempt is really slightly disingenuous. It is an attempt to reconcile us to absorption by pretending that we can remain in attitudes which we have no logical right to take up. The word 'love,' e.g., is indicative of an attitude which is not legitimate in connection with a denial of immortality. Love is a relation between two persons, both of whom will continue. It clings to the core of personality, and cannot exist if the personality is dissolved into nothingness. Pantheism, therefore, which

denies personal immortality, has no right to the use of the word 'love,' and the relief and refinement of the situation which it implies.

We ought to face the real character of the modern analogue of the Eastern and mediaeval type of absorption. It is really a degradation of human life to the level of the physical, and the absorption can be stated most completely by the use of physical analogies. It is an aspect, as has been said, 'of the worship of force with its underlying materialism, of great movements, of irresistible tendencies . . . no matter whether the change approve itself or not to the human sense of worth or the human conscience.'[1] The Pantheist ought to admit honestly that he is simply surrendering the human soul to be overwhelmed by colossal and irresistible forces. The denial of immortality is but another phase of that dissolution of human values which we noticed in connection with the materialistic tendency of Pantheism, and it is bound to have the same pessimistic effect.

And, if we are to escape pessimism, we must feel that we may take an 'unbounded forward view,' not only in regard to ourselves but also in regard to our friends who have passed through the gates of death. This is but a carrying forward to the future of our sense of the value of our present companionship. Mr. Allanson Picton attempts to minimize the sense of loss which emerges from the denial of the immortality of those we love, and he disregards the pleas of 'unhealed sorrow' which we bring forward as an objection to this negative theory. He points out how impossible, and, seeing that it would involve similar surroundings of change and decay, how undesirable it would be to restore the relations which once subsisted between us and

[1] Cf. Rogers's *Religious Conception of the World*, p. 279.

our departed friends. He would comfort us with the thought that 'what once was ours is now God's.'

But, in our longing for the personal immortality of our friends, we do not desire simply the reconstruction of previous relations. We wish rather that those relations should be improved, and that the attendant circumstances should also be improved. And surely this is a legitimate object of desire.

The essential point is, however, that we wish these relations to continue, and will be content with nothing less than this. We are quite willing to borrow for our consolation Mr. Picton's words and say, 'What once was ours is now God's'; but we maintain that it is impossible for Mr. Picton, with his presuppositions, to give these words their full meaning. All that he can legitimately say is, 'What once was ours, is now *God*,' i.e. absorbed in God. This is a very different kind of attempted consolation, and will not comfort the bitter grief of a human heart. We are not content that our loved ones should disappear in the abyss of an impersonal deity. On our side there remains the yearning of love towards those whom we have lost, and no amount of reference to the healing influence of time, which Mr. Picton very frequently indulges in, will persuade us that this yearning is other than deep-seated. Yet we are told that it is a yearning which must remain unsatisfied, for the other half of the relation, which we desire to maintain, has been swallowed up in God. Thus our friends are for ever lost, and grief without a faith in immortality becomes a hopeless sorrow.

So neither in regard to ourselves nor in regard to our friends can we avoid the conclusion that the peace and consolation which the pantheistic denial of immortality would seem sometimes to promise

are illusory. The charge that this denial issues in pessimism can hardly be refuted. There is much truth in Francis Thompson's description of Shelley's lines—

> He is a portion of that loveliness
> Which once he made more lovely—

as 'an inexpressibly sad exposition of pantheistic immortality.' And there is also much truth in his comment upon these lines: 'What utter desolation can it be that discerns comfort in this hope, whose wan countenance is the countenance of a despair! . . . What deepest depths of agony is it that finds consolation in this immortality, an immortality which thrusts you into death, the maw of nature, that your dissolved elements may circulate through her veins! . . . Yet such, the poet tells me, is my sole balm for the hurts of life. I am as the vocal breath floating from an organ. I too shall fade on the winds, a cadence soon forgotten. So I dissolve and die, and am lost in the ears of men: the particles of my being twine in newer melodies, and from my own death arise a hundred lives. Why, through the partition of this consolation Pantheism can hear the groans of its neighbour, Pessimism. Better almost the black resignation which the fatalist draws from his own hopelessness, from the fierce kisses of misery that hiss against his fears.[1]

With this poetic presentation of our main conclusion, a presentation infinitely pathetic as coming from one who in his own life so frequently failed to find the peace he so yearningly sought after, we may close our exposition and criticism. Pessimism is indeed the near neighbour of Pantheism, and if, for a season, Optimism comes to take up her abode,

[1] *Essay on Shelley*, Francis Thompson.

her sojourn is temporary only, and she soon takes her departure, to make room for the visitor who comes so frequently as to be counted almost a member of the household—a household not of faith, but of despair.

CHAPTER V

THE NEED OF THEISM

We have now come to the end of our study of Pantheism and our attempt to gather together some ideas as to its influence upon our sense of the value of life. We have confined our attention mainly to Eastern philosophy and religion, but we have discovered that pretty much the same tendencies reappear in the rarer Pantheism of the West. We have found that pantheistic tendency has been mainly pessimistic in character; that indifference, determinism, conservatism, absorption have been so emphasized as to leave little joy in the present or hope for the future. We have tried to give full value to what seemed to us the desirable elements in Pantheism. It relieves us from the coldness and deadness of deism and the narrowness of crude anthropomorphism, and enables monotheism to realize more fully the nearness of God and our kinship with Him. We recognize the intense spirituality of much of the teaching of Pantheism and the self-sacrifice which it has frequently inspired. But we feel that often it has brought God near only to remove Him farther away than ever. Pantheists have been so afraid of narrowness that, even when they have spoken of God as Infinite Spirit, they have allowed the thought of the infinite to absorb the thought of the spiritual, and so the possibility of an effective struggle against materialism has been

lessened. We trust that we have not presented Pantheism in more gloomy colours than the facts of the case demand, but, at the same time, we have not attempted to assign any relieving brightness which is not absolutely justified, or which can be justified only by a sentimental vagueness inimical to clear thinking. We feel that there never was a time when the pessimistic dangers allied with Pantheism and its deleterious effects upon moral and social life called for more emphatic statement. Perhaps this necessity is more obvious to those who, like the present writer, have spent a considerable number of years in an Eastern country, amongst people who live more constantly in the realm of ideas than do their fellow-philosophers of the West, and a people for whom Pantheism is not so much a philosophy as a creed—unhampered in its effect upon their lives by the presence of countervailing doctrines. We cannot but welcome the greater interest in and sympathy with Eastern modes of thought which recent literary events have indicated and encouraged, but at the same time we cannot but think that it would be a vast mistake if the West were to exchange her inheritance of strenuousness for the quietism and passivity of the East. In the West we may, it is true, be somewhat too ready to ' take arms,' but if, even occasionally, it is ' against a sea of troubles,' and if, by opposing, we end even a few of these troubles, this is surely better than to fold the hands to sleep in philosophic calm. We should be rendering but a mistaken service to our Eastern brethren if, through excess of undiscriminating appreciation, we were to refuse to them the contribution of strength which they are looking for from the West. Sometimes, indeed, it would seem as if it were almost unwillingly that they looked for inspiration from external sources, and in their natural and justifiable

pride of race they not infrequently write and speak as if they could derive all needed strength from their own philosophical tradition. It is, however, becoming increasingly obvious that in this direction there is little hope. The study we have just concluded—a study which has been concentrated on the most typically Indian philosophy—will, we think, have confirmed this impression. We may recognize to the full the nobility of Indian religious thinking, and may freely admit that it is here that India has made her grandest contribution to the history of the world; but we must also recognize that, even on a most favourable interpretation, India has failed to formulate a conception of God which can offer permanent comfort amongst the sorrows of life and sufficient inspiration for the moral struggle. And the failure is all the more tragic in view of the great achievements in general of Indian philosophical thought and the passionate intensity with which it has concentrated upon the religious search.

In the few suggestions we have to make as to a remedy for the disabilities we have noticed in connection with Pantheism, we shall keep in closer touch with Indian philosophy than in recent chapters, both because the tendencies we have noticed in Indian Pantheism have been found to be typical of all systems of Pantheism, and because Pantheism is found in India in its purest form, and the character of the influence which it has upon life will therefore be most clearly evident. That this influence has been and is, on the whole, pessimistic, has, we think, been made sufficiently clear.

Now, if any system of thought results in a pessimistic view of life, such a consequence rouses in us a certain amount of doubt regarding the adequacy of the system. For pessimism is an implicit accusa-

tion of the universe, or is, at least, a hint that we are proceeding on mistaken lines in our interpretation of it. It is a suggestion of abnormality and a failure to supply an explanation of certain anomalies. Pessimism means that we are content with a result which fails to satisfy our whole nature, that we rest with comparative tranquillity in truths which we are nevertheless compelled to regard as distressing. Pessimism cannot lay claim to any scientific profundity. It is a confession of defeat, an attempt to deny prematurely, simply because we cannot find the solution of it, that there is any problem yet to be solved. And yet, surely it is extraordinary that any one should be willing to rest in pessimism, to find satisfaction simply in the confession that there is no satisfaction to be found. As a German writer puts it: "Die seltsamsten der Glücksucher sind wohl die, welche es in Pessimismus suchen, und doch giebt es ihrer nicht wenige, und oft sind es nicht die unedelsten Naturen. Meistens aber ist ein gewisser Grössenwahn damit verbunden: es klingt grossartig alles über Bord geworfen zu haben, und alles, sich selbst eingeschlossen, für schlecht zu erklären. Als dauernder Zustand ist der Pessimismus aber meistens nur der zerrissene Philosophenmantel, durch dessen Löcher die menschliche Eitelkeit hervorblickt.'[1] The best thing that pessimists can do for us is to save us from the vanity which allows us to think that no solution can be found because we have not yet found a solution. Pessimism is a sign that the philosophical system which we have, it may be painfully, constructed, is not adequate. Our garment is full of holes, as the quotation has it. Pessimism ought to be a reminder that the questions we have put to ourselves regarding life are not yet answered, and that the answers already

[1] Dillthey, *Glück*.

given should not be accepted, if they lead to pessimism, until all other possible answers have been tried and, in turn, found wanting. Pessimism is, in short, a challenge to further inquiry. It urges us forward to a solution which will avoid in particular the dangers we have specially noted, which will enable us, e.g., to take up a middle position between acosmism and naturalism, which will take into consideration other phases of human nature besides the purely intellectual, which will give some relieving interpretation of pain and suffering, which will emphasize the reality of evil, but at the same time admit the possibility of progress and the ultimate victory of good, which will maintain the freedom of man and the value of his personality, both in this life and that which is to come. It seems to us that it is only in Theism that we can avoid the dangers indicated and meet the demands of which the deficiencies of Pantheism have made us aware.

In proceeding to offer a few suggestions in support of this contention we must on no account leave behind us the elements of value in the teaching of Pantheism. Eastern Pantheism, e.g., especially in the aspect of it which is predominant in the Upanishads, has laid great stress upon the principle of negation. We must not shut our eyes to the distinct place which renunciation has in the moral and religious life. We cannot win our souls by an easy and natural development of the impulses which are our original endowment. Sometimes strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. It is often only by sacrifice of the easy and the pleasant that we can reach the new life. If the hand or foot offend, they must be cut off, so that, even though halt and maimed, we may yet find entrance into the kingdom. The Indian ascetic

has distinctly a lesson to teach the easy-going and pleasure-loving religionist of modern times. The mistake lies not in the negations of Indian Pantheism, but in making negation the whole of the matter, in forgetting that the new life to which sacrifice leads may be infinitely fuller of meaning and of value than the old life. The principle of asceticism, when carried to an extreme, involves a reprehensible distrust of life. We have in our examination of Indian philosophy had repeated occasion to note this distrust of existence. In the Upanishads, e.g., we find it shadowed forth in the doctrine of *tapas*.[1] *Tapas* is sometimes elevated into a principle of creation, and does not thereby lose the significance of unpleasant coercion and renunciation. We find the distrustful tendency permeating the whole philosophy of *māyā*. Practically the same spirit is evidenced in the self-mutilations of the Yogi and the 'one-pointed' contemplative absorption of the mystic. In all these phases of thought and practice there is evident a tendency to spread renunciation to the whole of existence, to think that the world is altogether evil because it gives us the opportunity of doing evil, to wish to destroy all our human impulses because some of them are the occasions of temptation. The axe is laid to the root of a tree which would yet be capable of bearing fruit if only its unduly luxuriant branches were pruned. But the mistake of this extreme treatment must not blind us to the necessity of pruning. It is in the thought of this necessity, when transferred from the region of metaphor to the life of the spirit, that the value of negation lies.

Further, we must not forget the lesson of deep seriousness which Pantheism, with all its pessimism (and perhaps just by means of this pessimism),

[1] Cf. *Muṇḍaka* i. 1. 8.

and Indian teachers of it in particular, have to give us.

We have seen that the main life-problem of these latter thinkers was due to an intense and vivid consciousness of the sorrow of the world, of the vanity and impermanence of all mundane things. We have seen, also, that the gloom in which the problem originated was not easily shaken off, and coloured the solution to an unjustifiable extent. Nevertheless we must not, because of our abhorrence of gloomy conclusions, rush to the opposite extreme and indulge in a facile optimism. We must not light-heartedly gloss over the pain and evil of the world. If our lines have been cast in pleasant places, we must still remember the sorrow of our neighbours. If temptations have not overwhelmed us, if, because of favouring circumstances it may be, we have not fallen into grievous sins such as the world may mark, we must yet remember that with others the struggle has been a sore one, and sometimes the end has been not victory but defeat. We must not forget the changes in our destiny that the years may bring. We must not be so captivated by the pleasure of to-day as to forget the possible pain of to-morrow, nor so lulled to sleep by present security as to forget that almost immediately we may find ourselves in the forefront of the battle fighting against overwhelming odds for the purity of our souls and the righteousness of our lives. The blind, selfish, superficial, momentary existence can afford no solution of the problems of life. We must go forth to meet the sorrow of the world and of our destiny before we can hope to deal with that sorrow. He only is secure who is prepared for whatever the future may bring him. We cannot be prepared unless we realize all the possibilities, the sombre as well as the glad, the distress-

ing as well as the comforting, the dangerous as well as the safe. The surgeon must probe deeply before he can hope to cure the dangerous wound: so must we go deep down into the ills of life before we can apply the remedy. Light-heartedness must be balanced by serious-mindedness, and in emphasizing the latter the Upanishads teach us a lesson that should not be forgotten.

We should estimate also at its full value the other great contribution which they make to religious thought in their doctrine of monism and the identity of the human and divine. They have laid in this doctrine the speculative basis of mysticism, and more and more religion is tending in a mystical direction. The idea of a God at a distance from the world working upon an intractable matter which is the source of evil, or setting in motion a vast mechanism with which He need no longer actively concern Himself, is alien to our present-day thought. We demand that God should be in the world and in us. We feel that He is not far from any one of us, and that in Him we live and move and have our being. We emphasize the community of nature between the human and the divine. We are not separate, self-centred, independent beings, but divinity is within us and round about us. We desire to feel that God is all in all, and that we may abandon ourselves to His all-comprehending Being. Towards such a feeling the pantheistic doctrine of identity, as set forth in the Upanishads, certainly helps us onwards, and in so doing performs an essentially religious function. Pantheism, as has been said, 'challenges Christianity to make the most of its monotheism.'[1] It summons us, in all our formulation of the conception of the one and only God, to hold fast to the unity of humanity with the divine.

[1] Clarke, *Christian Doctrine of God*, p. 276.

Yet we have found that the aspect of this unity which Eastern Pantheism presents to us is inadequate to express the religious relationship. Such a relationship involves essentially two terms, and loses its content if the two terms are merged into one. The conception of identity, whatever degree of closeness of communion it may seem to promise, really destroys the possibility of communion altogether. The individual between whom and God the communion is supposed to exist is either denied all value or is indistinguishably merged in the totality of the Being of God. The unity of God is of such a character as to exclude all diversity. Therefore, if we are to retain any character, it must be at the expense of the Being of God. In other words, we have reached the dilemma that, if God is, we are not; if we are, God is not. All freedom and initiative have been taken away from the individual, and his personality has resolved itself into a shadowy mist. This result we have found to be due to the abstract procedure of intellectualism, and, if we want to reach a truer view, we must modify our exclusive devotion to this procedure, not by way of reaction to the extreme of scepticism and emotionalism, but by transformation and supplement. We must remember that our logical faculties are not our only faculties, and that inferential knowledge is not our only knowledge. We must, as it were, hold our intellect in fee for our other faculties, recognizing that through it the emotions must be controlled and the will receive guidance. It is only by thus widening our idea of the intellect and bringing it into connection with our whole personality in its higher and more spiritual exercise that we can escape from the *impasse* in which an abstract philosophy of identity has landed us.

And while we thus supplement our idea of the

intellect, we must also, in relation to religious experience, keep faithful to the fundamental condition of all experience whatsoever. This condition is certainly not the condition of identity between the knower and the object known. It is rather the relation of subject and object—the assertion of a duality within a unity. However congenial subject and object may be to one another, however closely they may be united in the unity of knowledge, they yet remain distinct. The completest relation between them is not so much one of penetration as of co-operation. Penetration seems due to the misapplication of spatial and physical metaphors. The nearer we approach anything the more completely do we come under its influence or bring it under ours, until it would seem, *a fortiori*, as if the most complete connection could be got by the annihilation ot all intervening space. The illustration of fusion also plays a not unimportant part in this fallacy of thinking that the completest knowledge is represented by penetration rather than by co-operation. And yet, if we consider the matter more carefully, we see that, even in regard to things on what might be called the lowest levels of experience, the most secure knowledge which we have of them is the knowledge which enables us to manipulate them. So, in general, truth is that which enables us to act. Truth does not mean the mere pouring in of impressions upon our souls while we remain passive, allowing the pliant clay of our minds to be moulded by the shapes of our experience or the powers of the objects to transfuse our being through and through. If this were the meaning of truth and knowledge, then identity, or the nearest possible approach to it, might be the ideal. But if truth means possibility of action—not of any action, as the cruder section of the pragmatists might put it,

but of orderly and systematic action—then we can no longer represent the ideal relation as the capturing or absorption of the subject by the object. The activity of the subject must be conserved, and along with this its distinction from the object—the relation, i.e., must be one of co-operation and response. The same considerations apply to knowledge of other persons. Our understanding of them is most complete when we can co-operate with them, not when they overwhelm us by the compulsion of their personality or when we overwhelm them. Here again co-operation and distinction is the ideal relation—or, at least, the only relation which proves itself to be permanently attractive.

We do not see any objection whatsoever to carrying with us this idea of the necessary distinction of subject and object when we are considering the relation between us and God. He must be the highest object of all our thinking, and our relation to Him must be one of communion, not of absorption. No doubt there are difficulties connected with thinking of God as Object. We must be on our guard, e.g., against likening Him to the ordinary objects of sense, and we must not think that we can ever occupy the same attitude of predominance or even of equality to God as we take up towards ordinary objects. If they guard us against this danger, the warnings of the Upanishads against attributing objective qualities to God serve a useful purpose. Their exhortations also that we should think of Him as the Universal Subject emphasize the spiritual kinship between God and us. Yet, on the other hand, however much *more* than a mere object God may be, and to whatever extent His reality may envelop us, it can never destroy our distinction from Him which is involved

in the fundamental relation of all knowledge, viz. the subject-object relation. And until we are prepared to fulfil the conditions of this relation, it seems to us an unwarrantable conclusion to say that God cannot be known. Religious agnosticism, even of the type which is beautified by humility, is a last resort, to which we should not betake ourselves until we have exhausted all the means of knowledge which are at our disposal. And we contend that we have not even begun to exhaust these means of knowledge until we are willing to use our knowledge-giving faculties in a normal way, until we can regard God as an Object, distinct from ourselves, however similar in nature, and however many bonds of unity between Him and us remain yet to be discovered. The pantheistic assertion of identity between us and God is false to the fundamental condition of knowledge.

Before considering this point further we may notice the emphasis which universal religious demands lay upon this distinction. Not only must this distinction be observed if God is to be known, but it must also be observed if God is to be loved and worshipped. Love, as we have seen in connection with our criticism of the Indian religious relation, is impossible on the basis of mere identity. We may speak, indeed, with Spinoza of the 'intellectual love of God,' but unless we can conserve on the one hand the individual who is to love and on the other hand the Divine Object who is to be loved, this phrase can indicate only the thinking over again of the ideas of God. Love is a relation between two terms, and the relation cannot be maintained if the two terms are fused together into an identity. Love means a going forth in sympathy towards the being of another, and unless that other is constituted by distinction from ourselves the

exercise of love is impossible. Similarly with the relation of worship. It also implies a going forth beyond ourselves, a concentration of feelings of devotion and adoration upon a divine Being from whom we all the time distinguish ourselves. Whichever way we allow the stress of the identity to fall, worship would be rendered impossible. If we allow the stress to fall upon ourselves, we at once see that it is impossible to worship ourselves. If, on the other hand, we allow it to fall upon the Object, we find that, if we are merged in the Object of our adoration, it is equally impossible that *we* should render to the Object the homage which all worship includes. So the distinctness of the subject-object relation is the basis of the essentially religious impulse of love and adoration.

To return to the relation of knowledge, we have said also that only by faithfulness to the distinction between subject and object can God be understood. We have seen that the intellectualism of the Upanishads ended in a confession of intellectual bankruptcy. No predicates could be applied to God in the ordinary use of the word 'predicate.' The ultimate conclusion was a negation—*neti*, *neti* —it is not so, it is not so. And we have seen also that this refusal of knowledge led to a swing of the pendulum in the direction of emotionalism and riotous imagination. Mysticism has always been liable to this extreme of emotionalism, unrestrained imagination and scepticism. When the barrenness of the intellect has been revealed, the soul has comforted itself with a religion of mere feeling. Rationalism has given place in modern times to romanticism, and to-day we are confronted with the anti-intellectualism of the Bergsonian philosophy. Now we maintain that this extreme of reaction is unnecessary. We do not wish for a moment to

forget the warning which is conveyed in emotional theology against the impertinent use of our intellectual faculties or the misapplication of the categories of science. We cannot by searching find out God, we cannot comprehend Him within the narrow range of our logical conceptions. The lesson of humility should be well learnt. But at the same time humility does not mean distrust, or, if it does have this meaning, a reason for the distrust has to be supplied. Such a reason may be found in the consideration that the intellect, in giving such a prominent place to the principle of identity, has made its own task impossible. It has divorced itself from the ordinary conditions of experience, and so its experience cannot bring forth the fruit of knowledge. If, in order to know a thing, we must be that thing, then all knowledge is for ever impossible. So, many of the mystics have submitted to what they thought was inevitable, and have said that God cannot be known except by way of the feelings. But this doctrine of the impotence of knowledge is only a consequence of the failure of the mystic to take account of objectivity, and is not necessary. Mystical experience does not necessarily float in the air, reaching forth to nothing beyond its own emotions. It has a relation to ultimate truth, and the aim of the highest type of mystic has always been to reach that *truth*. As has been said, 'Mysticism, if it be not a real communion of the human soul with a Beyond which is a supreme objective fact and not a mere subjective ideal, is nothing.' We must fully recognize the existence of this objective fact, and must use our intellect to investigate its nature. The oft-recurring negative refrain—*neti*, *neti*—of Indian philosophy must not be regarded as ultimate, but only as an expression of humility, and as indicating a certain amount of

dissatisfaction with the results which have *as yet* been obtained.

The intellect is of no avail in the service of religion unless it keeps rigidly to the conditions of the subject-object relation, but, when used with due observance of this condition, it should not be distrusted. We may rely upon it to bring us into contact with ultimate truth. Its use, in even the smallest affairs of practical life, implies a consciousness of an ultimate standard of truth, and encourages us in the belief that the secrets of the Divine are to some extent accessible to our human thought. We cannot say that the simplest statement is true, without thereby testifying to a standard of truth and putting forward a claim to some sort of acquaintance with that standard. We believe that the validity of the religious use of the intellect is a natural conclusion from its use in any other department of life, and that, if we trust it anywhere at all, we must also trust it in the sphere of religion.

But our present purpose is rather to emphasize the condition of this effective use and the general character of the results obtained. The condition is, we repeat once more, faithfulness to the subject-object relation.

The results, further, of a normal use of the intellect and a true appreciation of its range and power are results of a theistic character. Pantheistic identity is impossible; God and man, though possessing community of nature, must yet remain distinct, with a distinctness analogous to that of subject and object in ordinary experience. Faithfulness to the conditions of knowledge means an approach towards Theism, and a corresponding departure from Pantheism.

We have reached in this way an irreducible

distinction between ourselves and God, but a distinction which, it is also to be borne in mind, does not involve alienation or separation. It is a distinction on the basis of which communion and co-operation are possible. But in order to show this more fully, we must seek to establish the theistic distinction between God and the world, which, while firmly holding to the working of the Divine in the course of nature, does not identify Him with merely natural process but holds His transcendence equally firmly with His immanence. We can establish this transcendence, however, on a secure basis only by attributing moral character and personality to God.

In order to show justification for such attribution, we must consider a little more fully the moral needs of humanity, which we saw remained unsatisfied on any pantheistic system, and try to show that these needs, when rightly interpreted, point to such a theistic position as we have indicated. It is fitting that at this juncture our thoughts should turn in the direction of moral experience. We have just been attempting to establish the independence—the *selbst-ständigkeit*—of the individual, and it seems natural now to proceed to consider this independence as it proves itself in action and to inquire whether the character of this action may not throw some light upon the theistic problem.

The moral nature of man has certainly not been overlooked in the Eastern Pantheism which we have been mainly considering. The Upanishads, as we saw, emphasized the human sense of need and the existence of aspirations after a better life. They granted that whatever a man reaches he wishes to go beyond. But we do not think that in them or in any other system of Pantheism there is to be found a full appreciation of the significance of this fundamental craving in human nature or an under-

standing of the closeness of contact with reality which the moral life indicates.

There are two possible ways of interpreting the moral progress of the individual or of humanity. We may look upon this progress as a revelation of reality or as a growing consciousness of unreality, i.e. as leading us toward something or away from something, as positive or as negative. Eastern Pantheism and modern naturalistic Pantheism alike refuse to allow us to regard morality as interpretative of reality. In Eastern Pantheism morality is for the most part a mere exercise of the soul, fulfilling its main function in loosing the bonds which bind us to the ordinary world. We act in order that we may cease from acting, and our chief desire is for the destruction of all desires. Thus by emptying our life of all content we shall be the more ready for that identification of the human and the divine which is the goal set before us in this teaching. It is obvious, and has been frequently pointed out, that such a procedure would not enable us to distinguish between the life and death of the soul. We are told that by exercising our moral capacities we may purify our souls from all that is earthly, but we might just as easily reach this end by refraining from action altogether and refusing to use the moral powers which we possess. But the most important point for us to notice here is that, according to this teaching, morality cannot be expected to throw any light upon the reality which we are said to reach by means of it, for, by the time we are in contact with this reality, morality itself has disappeared. The Upanishads, at least, do not allow us to carry moral predicates with us to the highest reality. They do not allow us to attribute goodness or holiness or righteousness to God.

Similarly, naturalistic Pantheism also refuses any

interpretative character to morality. If we are but insignificant atoms in a vast physical process, morality is little better than an excrescence. Reality, as conceived by the mere scientist, has no place for it. It may be a useful policy for our guidance to a comfortable life, but by means of it we can build up nothing permanent either in our own souls or in the world, for we shall be swept away again into the universal process, and be as if we had never been; and at the end of the present age the world-process will simply return to the former state from which it emerged.

But is this refusal to allow morality to be interpretative a necessary one? May not moral progress be illuminative in a positive manner? May not moral feeling indicate to us that we have a certain part to play within a whole which is infinitely wider than our present experience but yet is most closely connected with it? Do we not feel that in all our moral struggle we are in contact with reality? Take the simplest deed that we do, and we find that there is a character of irrevocableness about it. When once we have done a deed, nothing can change that deed. It is done for ever—inexorably. We feel that we are not dealing with fancies but with facts. Similarly, the distinction between right and wrong seems to be a fundamental one, and not simply an arbitrary fiction of our own. Unless the conscience is perverted, there is in the doing of what we clearly know to be right from a moral point of view (at which even the Upanishads would allow us provisionally to take our stand) a feeling of harmony with reality which seems to be revelation of the character of that reality. Even the Swami Vivekānanda allowed that goodness was a nearer coating of reality, even though he refused to allow that reality ultimately admitted moral predicates. When

we have done what is right we feel that reality admits of and accepts our deed, and that in the doing of it our eyes have been opened to the truth of existence, that we have attained to a consciousness of the movement of the world with which we may co-operate, and in so doing discover our own true greatness. Even if we were to force ourselves into the position that our usual distinctions between right and wrong are merely conventional, we may still fall back upon a secure position. Take only the universal craving in the human soul for the *better*, simply for the *better*; does it mean nothing? Does it not mean, at the very least, that we have a consciousness of a good beyond that to which we have already attained? And this again has a double implication. It means that we refuse the acquiescence in the actual which some phases of naturalistic Pantheism would encourage us in, but it means also that, on the other hand, we cling firmly to the belief that there is a reality beyond the present actuality which shall justify our belief in goodness and provide the possibility of the realization of it. Our consciousness of the better demands an ascending scale of values which shall culminate in one Supreme Value. Such a Supreme Value is necessary to explain even the faintest moral aspiration, therefore by a not unjustifiable exercise of faith we assert what has been already described as the 'identity of value and existence.' We demand that 'there shall not be one lost good.' We interpret the ultimate reality rather in terms of worth than in terms of mere totality of existence, and we hold that the idea of worth is a contradictory idea unless it includes the idea of existence. We hold that nothing can be regarded as supremely valuable unless it has also a place in the scheme of ultimate existence, and that, more positively, wherever there

is a belief in a Supreme Value, there is also a belief in the existence of that Supreme Value. We must not be taken to mean that in a purely arbitrary manner we may form a conception of something as good and forthwith demand that this good shall have existence. Our argument rests on the fundamental and general character of the moral consciousness, upon the desire for the 'better' which is inalienable from humanity. We hold that the 'better' implies the 'best,' and that we cannot pass even the simplest moral judgment without thereby assuming that the Supreme Reality possesses moral character. One moral judgment leads on to another in an endless chain. We continually ask why a thing or an act is good. One answer leads on to another question, and the final 'why' can be answered only by an assertion of the goodness of God. It is not a dogmatic assertion—our argument is that the first moral question in the chain of question and answer implies the last moral answer.

Of course from the point of view of the Upanishads it may be contended that this argument is invalid for the simple reason that existence is not a blessing but a curse. Existence may be a diminution of value rather than an enhancement of it. Therefore we are not at liberty to argue that the Highest Good necessarily includes existence, or to think that we make goodness any more goodness by attaching existence to it. To this contention we may reply, in the first place, that the followers of the Upanishads do not ultimately deny the value of existence. Their assertion that existence is an evil would apply only to what they would call empirical existence. The whole aim of their teaching is to show how we may attain to communion with a reality which indubitably exists. Alongside of this admission of the value of existence

which we may justifiably extract from their teaching we put the ordinary human moral consciousness. We hold that the sheer force of logic demands that whoever believes in an Ultimate Reality of any kind and at the same time *is* a moral being must unite the two ideas of goodness and of reality. In the second place, we may put the matter less abstractly, and simply deny the implication that existence generally, whether empirical or transcendental, is on the whole a curse rather than a blessing. The ground of our denial is that such procedure is abnormal, as has been already pointed out, and the *prima facie* evidence is in favour of the normal. To attach the idea of existence, then, to the idea of goodness is not to detract from goodness but rather to increase it, and, if this be so, then it follows that the Supremely Valuable, which value by hypothesis cannot be further increased, must already include existence—in other words, we may apply moral predicates to God.

But if our moral consciousness leads on to the idea of God as possessing moral qualities, we must conceive of God as personal. For we cannot think of morality except as the characteristic of a personal being. It consists in conscious activity, and conscious activity is unintelligible except in connection with personality. And we are encouraged in thus attributing personality to God if we hold fast to our belief in the ultimate identity of value and existence. For personality is our most valuable possession, and we can think of the ultimately valuable only in terms of the highest value we know. We may find also some support in the place which the idea of a personal God holds in the universal religious consciousness. We have found that, even within the system of thought which has been dominated by the Upanishads, discontent

has been frequently expressed with a God who is merely impersonal. 'The worship of the impersonal laid no hold upon my heart,' says Tulsidas, and he is but echoing the feelings and interpreting the practice of multitudes who have been searching their hearts and finding in the fullness of their personality the revelation of God. It is an orderly process. From striving after the better, we pass on to trust in the best, and trust in the best means that we assign existence to the best, or that we describe existence by calling it the best. If existence, the ultimate reality, can be thus described, it follows that it must be personal, for personality is the home of all our values.

Thus we may connect the ideal of morality with the ultimate reality. Morality finds an answer in the fundamental character of the universe. It becomes much more than a human invention, it moves forward to the accomplishment of a Divine Good, it acquires, as has been said, ontological value. The answer of reality comes back to us in many ways. It comes in the feeling of remorse when we have done what is wrong, in the feeling of obligation when we hesitate whether to do or to avoid the right, in the feeling of harmony when we have gained a moral victory. But, however the answer comes, the important point is that it *does* come, and comes with such a strength of assurance as no merely intellectual demonstration can ever hope to reach.

Thus we may say that the necessity of being faithful to the subject-object relation in all experience, with its defence against subjective abstraction on the one hand and purely naturalistic objectivity on the other, combined with the attempt to satisfy the demands of the moral consciousness, including the consciousness of the supreme value of personality, seems to lead us to a definitely theistic position.

It is only in such a conception of God as non-absorbent of our personalities and as at once immanent in the world and transcendent over it, that we can find anything to meet those needs of human nature which Pantheism has revealed to us but failed to satisfy. We have found that Pantheism can deal with the problems of the pain and evil of the world only by negating the world or by regarding it as the unfolding of a meaningless and inevitable process. It is mere process and not progress, and it sweeps into its universal movement all human individuality and freedom, holding out no hope of personal continuance or of ultimate victory. To deny the world is, however, to run away from the problem rather than to solve it; and to deprive man of freedom and the hope of permanence, or at least continuance, is to do violence to his nature. We require a conception of God which will preserve the reality of the world, take full account of the pain and evil that is in it, and yet hold out the hope of progress both for the world and the individuals in it, allowing man to regain the freedom and the value of his personality throughout all the stages of the process and even in the ultimate consummation. Such a conception we find in Theism, and certainly not in Pantheism.

We found that we had a reasonable amount of justification for regarding God as personal. It follows from this that He may best be interpreted through personality, and *a fortiori* along the lines of the best endowments of human nature. We gain courage for such interpretation in the answer that seems to come to us when our own spirits are most alive and when we are living on the highest plane of human life. It is then that we feel ourselves nearest the universal. In the pure, disinterested love of our fellows we feel that we are nearest to the Divine, and here we seem to gain

a hint that the deepest reality is One whose nature is to love the world and to care for its movements and for the interests of the human lives that are lived in it. In this conception of the love of God we seem to reach at once the deepest truth of philosophy and of religion. There seems to be in a theistic construction sufficient warrant for this conception of the love of God, and it suggests a solution of many of the difficulties and disabilities which we have noted in connection with Pantheism.

First of all, it gives us an illuminating view of the true relation between God and the world. The world which He has created is not a mere play of His fancy. He has taken up the attitude of seriousness to it. Between Him and it there exists a real relation, such a relation as is implied in the ordinary use of the word 'love'—a relation of reciprocity. We must not think that this reciprocity involves anything approaching equality, as if God and the universe stood over against each other entirely dualistically, and that between them there is the equality of action and reaction. God is much more than adequate to the universe which He has made. There is in Him a reserve of fullness and of power which is by no means exhausted in the work of creation. The sense of need which is inherent in humanity shows that the universe is not complete and self-contained in itself, and religious experience gives further assurance that beyond the finite universe there are the infinite riches of God. God has limited Himself in creating the world, but the important point to notice is that He trusts the world which He has made. It is more than a mere thought. It has been given such reality that He would not be God without it. In a sense He is now a finite God as limited by the universe He has made. As Ward

puts it: 'The term "Finite God," as accepted by true Theists, means for them all that God can mean, if God implies the world and is not a God without it; it means a living God with a living world, not a potter God with a world of illusory clay, not an inconceivable God that is only infinite and absolute because it is beyond everything and means nothing.' [1] The evidence of God's trust in the world and His love towards it lies in the fact that He has created a *living* world and not a world of 'illusory clay,' i.e. a world which is either a dream or is real only with the reality of dead matter. God's limitation, it must be remembered, is not a limitation imposed upon Him by some fate or force. It is a self-limitation, and the manner of the limitation is that He has breathed into the universe the breath of life, and, most of all, that He has created self-conscious beings. It is only thus that we can properly distinguish between creation and a mere evolution and unfolding. Sometimes it is said that the main implication of creation, as distinct from emanation, is that God could have acted otherwise if He had so chosen, but the emphasis should rather be put on the self-subsistence of that which is created. As Lotze has it: 'A thing which was not conscious of itself and which did not feel or in some fashion or other enjoy what we might call being for itself, would never be anything more than a selfless state of the Creator, and there would be nothing by which it could be distinguished from the reality which it already has as a thought of God.' [2] Unless we can emphasize this idea, that creation consists pre-eminently in the bringing into existence of self-conscious beings, the unity of God will swallow up the difference, and the assertion of God will mean

[1] *Pluralism and Theism*, p. 444.
[2] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 95.

either the negation of the world or the identification of God with its totality.

A favourite way of putting the matter in modern philosophy is to say that creation is unintelligible unless it involves the creation of creators. The universe is made up of self-conscious centres of initiative, and the method of development which God has chosen is to give to these creators freedom of action and self-determination. We must take the fact of human existence as we find it, and man is less than a man if he is not creative. This conception does not mean that God has surrendered His influence over men or His general direction of the world, but it means that we must not interpret this direction in any mechanical way so as to interfere with human liberty and personality. Neither, in our attempt to rise above mechanical conceptions, are we at liberty to speak of the consciousness of God as including or penetrating human consciousness. Such an idea would be subversive of the very idea of consciousness, for consciousness means nothing unless it means existence for oneself. No, the conception we are considering rather means that the relation between God and man must be regarded as one of co-operation. God contributes indeed the original impulse, but He does so in the form of 'urgency, or forward push,' and not in the form of compulsion, producing inevitable evolution. Perhaps the analogy of literary collaboration might throw light on the relation. The predominant partner in the collaboration may contribute the inspiration and a certain amount of guidance, but he does not do so in such a way as to destroy the free activity of the other partner. Thus the primary love of God to the world is shown in His creation of *creative* beings. The universe is real because of them and for them.

This emphasis upon the reality of creation carries with it important consequences. It enables us, first of all, to see the untruth of asceticism, if asceticism is carried further than is necessary for the purposes of moral discipline. Asceticism of an extreme type involves a condemnation of the world, but how can we entirely condemn a world which God has made, has really made? As Meredith puts it: 'Earth is not forgotten for a moment as a vehicle for the knowledge of God.' It is given to us rather to enjoy, to appreciate, to use, not necessarily to accept in its totality as giving us completeness of guidance, but certainly to value as the sphere of God's working. There may be in it a mystery of pain and evil, but for these there are certain obvious remedies also provided in the reforming activity of man and the protecting care of God, and until we have fully used these remedies we cannot dismiss the problem of pain and evil as insoluble.

Further, emphasis upon the reality of the universe, and especially upon the reality of human activity, means that history is given its proper value. The development of the universe is real, and not a mere play of fancy. We have seen that, on the principles of the Upanishads, it was found impossible to derive any guidance from history, and the influence of these principles has resulted in the comparative absence of the historical spirit in India. On general grounds this attitude might seem to be foreign to human nature. Is not poetry full of references to the value of the past, to possibilities of men rising on stepping-stones of their dead selves, to the 'increasing purpose' of the ages? Philosophical contempt for history is all the more surprising in a country like India, where tradition holds such undisputed sway. The contradiction between philosophy and practice can only mean that facts have

been too strong for the philosophy. The force of history has been felt even while its reality is denied, and, as happens in all cases where theory and practice are divorced, the unrationalized facts have acquired an excessive influence. But surely we ought rather to bring our theory into agreement with the facts and attempt to understand and value the facts by means of it. History has reality as the record of the activity of man and the guidance of God, and is worthy of study in order that we may learn from it how in the future we may advance beyond the past. We may perhaps find in history the revelation of God. It is only on the basis of a theistic belief in a God who guides the historical process but is not Himself immersed in it that we can get any true idea of progress. Otherwise history becomes a mere wearisome repetition without meaning. We can ascribe meaning to it only if we can regard it as one line of development in which each succeeding part of the line represents an improvement on what has gone before. If the process itself is all, or if God is all and the process therefore illusory, then there is no source from which the energy for new creation and advance can be drawn and no sphere in which this new creation can manifest itself. In a conversation which the present writer had recently with an Indian thinker, the latter professed to find the idea of progress unmeaning; and it turned out that the root of his difficulty was that he held a philosophical view which altogether excluded purpose from history. But the mere belief in the expression of Divine purpose in history is not sufficient to give genuine interest to it unless we can combine the idea of human freedom with Divine purpose—and this, as we have just seen, Theism allows us to do. Men cannot be regarded as mere products of history, even if history

is to be regarded as divine. Genuine historical interest centres in human effort to get beyond the past, in the effective consciousness of man that he is more than a mere link in a chain. A true conception of history requires, however, that both aspects of the historical movement be kept steadily in view. If we pay exclusive attention to human effort, history is apt to assume the appearance of chaotic multiplicity, whereas if we pay exclusive attention to Divine purpose, we have the result of a mechanical unitary process. The chief value of the theistic view is that it enables us to maintain the combination indicated, with the effect that we are at once conscious of our own strength and responsibility and at the same time know that whatever effort we put forth will be met and furthered by the co-operation of the Divine purpose.

The thought of God as adopting an attitude of serious trust in the world-process makes the idea of incarnation much more intelligible and increases the possibility of its realization. Incarnation is essentially the entrance of the Divine into the world development. But if this is either without reality or without meaning, then incarnation is logically impossible. It has always seemed a curious contradiction that belief in incarnation should be so enormously prevalent in a country like India, where the dominant philosophy does not permit of a true theory of incarnation. If all entry into the world of time is regarded as more or less a surrender to illusion, then we cannot have an incarnation of God in the fullest sense of the term. Still, there is probably no country where the belief in incarnation—or rather incarnations—is so widespread as in India. The contrast is similar to that which we dealt with in last paragraph and may be explained in the same way, as a more or less unconscious

retention of incompatible ideas. We may notice also that the want of a proper appreciation of the historical probably explains the exceedingly multifarious character of Indian incarnations. The belief in incarnation attaches itself to a prodigious number of objects. Now a true theory of the seriousness of the world-process and its close relation with the purposes of God would enable us to rationalize the facts and at the same time make intelligible the entry of the divine into them. A barrier of orderly fact would thus be set up which would restrain the imagination from running riot in the construction of a vast crowd of deities capable of reflecting every passing whim and fancy of the worshippers. Revulsion from such extravagance might lead us to a philosophical theory which would deny altogether the possibility of incarnation; but Theism does not demand this disregard of a universally current mode of apprehension of the union of human and the divine. The theistic view of history simply lays down certain conditions of incarnation, viz. that it should be real and that it should be reasonable. Provided these conditions are fulfilled the possibility of incarnation is established on a firm basis by Theism.

We may go on, further, to point out how Theism, with its combination of the ideas of Divine love and human freedom, throws light upon other problems in regard to which Pantheism left us in difficulties. Take, e.g., the problem of pain and evil. At the very outset we see that the difficulty is lessened if we have found room in the world for a conception of human freedom. If God does not compel the action of men, but co-operates with their freedom, then we cannot ascribe all the pain and evil to God. The explanation of much of it may be found in the way in which man has misused his freedom. We may also find in the self-deter-

mination of man one of the forces making for restitution, and shall not have to base our whole expectation upon an overwhelming and therefore mechanical action of God. Further, the burden of pain is also greatly lightened by the thought of a divine purpose in the world. The solution of the problem which Pantheism offers is that we should treat pain as unreal or as inevitable. The former solution is the favourite one in the idealistic phase of Indian philosophy. We are to be comforted by the thought of the unreality of pain, but it should be noticed that the idea of unreality applies to the whole sphere in which pain occurs, rather than to the particular sources of pain. When, again, we face the particular facts of pain we are soothed, if not comforted, by the idea of fate. The individual has no rights over against the whole in which he is placed, and should not make even such a claim to rights of this kind as is implied in the protest against pain. Such a solution, however, cannot satisfy us in regard to the problem of pain. With the widening of sympathy and the deepening of the moral consciousness, pain is coming to be more and more the problem of the individual life. We cannot group men in the mass in regard to their sufferings so easily as perhaps we once could do. We cannot disregard the connection of pain with other people as individuals. And, in the same way, a growing consciousness of the value of our own personality brings pain into closer connection with ourselves. The only explanation of pain which seems satisfactory is that it should contribute to the permanent welfare of ourselves and others as individuals. We receive comfort only if over against our present unhappiness we can put a sense of our permanent welfare in the sight of God. Further, even if we were able to annihilate in thought the rights of

our own personality and suffer for the good of the whole, Pantheism fails to supply an adequate motive for this resignation. Before we can suffer willingly and joyfully for the good of the whole we must be persuaded that the whole is ultimately good or is tending towards the good. But for Pantheism the ultimate end towards which the whole is moving is characterless, and we are immediately left with the question—why should we suffer ? We can receive a satisfying answer only if we can conceive of God as the home of values, the ultimate reality of goodness, and can regard ourselves as suffering present trials, partly for the sake of our own true and permanent personality, and partly in order that others may enter along with us into permanent ethical communion with God.

But it is of the utmost importance that, even when we are permitted by Theism to attain to a belief in the goodness of God and His interest in the world, we should not again fall into the pantheistic error of regarding the goodness that is to be, as already realized by us or as the inevitable outcome of a process in regard to which we have no responsibility. If this were to be the result of our theistic faith it might even be said that our last state is worse than our first. We are now in danger of superficial optimism, and, inasmuch as this diminishes the seriousness of life, its consequences are perhaps more disastrous in many cases than those of deep-seated pessimism. Theism, indeed, gives us confidence in the reality of goodness beyond the actual. It brings us to a faith in God not only as the ground of being but as the entirely satisfying end of being. It gives us a notion of development which is controlled by the idea that outside or rather above the developing process there is a universal order which gives inspiration

for all the movements of the developing process. It allows us to rise to the conception that the laws which are above the things which develop constitute what we mean by purpose and must be contained as ideas in a Supreme Mind. This mind is the real embodiment of the ideal, and in the God whose being it describes the whole process of the world finds that meaning which we signify by the word 'progress.'

But at the same time the reality of goodness in which Theism allows us to believe is in contrast with the actual—a contrast which corresponds to the distinction between the ideal and the actual which is implicit in our moral consciousness. Pantheism of an optimistic kind makes, it might be said, a too rapid journey to the end of things and also misinterprets the process—mechanizes the process—by which that end is to be reached. Theism, on the other hand, while giving us elements of hope, takes a scientific cross-section of actuality which reveals the true state of affairs, which shows that goodness is *not yet* a reality and indicates our responsibility for making it a reality in the sphere of the actual. Theism reveals the possibility of human effort, and fills us with hope that this effort will be crowned by victory, but it does not for a moment allow us to forget the *need* of effort. We must not think that the ideal for the world can be realized without the exercise of our freedom. God has entered into co-operation with man, and will not destroy the reality of that co-operation by taking our burden upon Himself. We not only depend on God, but God depends on us. Our unity with God, as has been said, is not a unity of nature, but a unity of grace, i.e. the end will not be accomplished by any means which are of a mechanical character or which relieve us of responsibility. To

bring about the realization of the ideal without reference to the effort of man would really defeat the purpose of God, for that purpose is the development and completion of a world of free personalities, and not the elaboration of a number of machines, however ingenious and perfect these may be. God aims at a society of perfect human characters, but the perfection of human character is the crown of human effort, and cannot be attained except by means of that effort. Between us and the ideal there is a great gulf fixed. The ideal world is not waiting for us already realized in actuality. Across the gulf we can pass only by our own decision and our own constant effort. All is not accomplished so that we may fold our hands and allow external influences to have their way with us. All is not complete so that we may allow a paralysis of human endeavour to creep over us. Our wills are ours, and it is only in the exercise of them as ours that they may reach harmony with the will of God.

The great practical value of Theism is that in its view of the world it avoids the pantheistic extremes of superficial optimism and unrelieved pessimism. It does not shut its eyes to the pain and evil in the world, nor does it regard these elements as inevitable. It does not assert, on the one hand, that there is nothing to improve, or, on the other hand, that improvement is impossible. The intensity of its faith in the victory of the good is a measure of the intensity of its abhorrence of the evil. In discussing the value of Christian Theism, Pfleiderer very well brings out this secure intermediate position of Theism in general: 'The Christian view of the world proves itself to be the true view by the fact that it combines the highest idealism, belief in the world-governing power of the good, with the

common-sense realism which sees the world as it actually is. The Christian's attitude to reality is always to a certain extent critical and polemical, because he measures it by his ideal, and he cannot overlook the distance between the reality and what ought to be. But, with all this, for him it is not less firmly established that the world, in spite of all its imperfections, is the work of God, the object of the redeeming love, the place of the coming kingdom. In this wonderful antinomy lies the enigma, lies the strength of Christianity.' [1]

Pure Theism states such an antinomy without hesitation, and is moreover able to suggest on which member of the antinomy the chief emphasis ought to be laid. It deepens in us a faith in the ultimate victory of the good, and the good which will be finally victorious is conceived of as a good in which the value of each man's soul will be conserved and its sin and imperfections removed. It has been said that 'man's vocation is in God, or he has none,' and this vocation is a call to eternal communion, the suggestion of a relation in which man and God shall continue as real personal factors, bound together in a unity of purpose, which purpose exists in the mind of God as a 'forward push, though not a compulsion,' and will be gradually realized in the world through the united action of God and men. It is from such a faith alone that the moral force can come which is necessary for the overcoming of the evil that is in the world and for deliverance from its sin. With such a faith we may be rendered secure in our optimism; without it, we are given over to pessimism of the most deadening and soul-destroying kind.

It may be doubted, however, whether, after all, pure Theism is sufficient to work out the ideal which

[1] *Philosophy and Development of Religion*, p. 314.

it has presented. Can pure Theism do more than state the antinomy between the ideal and the actual, and point out with a considerable amount of reassuring power the direction in which the solution lies? Have we not perhaps still described the process in too orderly a manner? Are we not still in danger of substituting a construction of thought for the actual process of development or transformation which must take place in human souls and human society if the ideal is to be reached? In short, does pure Theism, while it is clearly aware of the sin that is in the world, deal sufficiently with this sin or consider adequately the weakness of the human heart? It seems necessary to emphasize more strongly than we have yet done the need of divine assistance if we are to win the salvation of our souls. It is not sufficient that we should be endowed inalienably with freedom and self-determination. In committing the original trust to man, in deciding to create spirits, God, if we may say it without irreverence, took certain risks, and in the course of development the seriousness of these risks has been manifested over and over again in each individual soul. Man received the gift of freedom of choice, but along with this gift he also received the power of choosing evil rather than good. And, in face of the facts of the world, it cannot be said that he has refused to exercise this power. We cannot deny the frequent fact of sin, with all the consequent misery and gloom which Pantheism has not failed to emphasize. And often man has gone so far astray that the very power of return seems to have been taken from him. Was God to leave the matter thus? Was He to provide no redeemer? It seems to us that, if we are to carry out to its logical conclusion the thought of the love of God, we cannot say that this love would

be fully exercised if the world were simply to be left in the confusion which the erring self-will of man has introduced. The love of God to the world must be not merely that which gives reality to the world and provides for the reality of free human life; it must also bring salvation. God has entrusted men with power which they often use to wander away from Him, but He does not leave them to their wanderings without a care for their fate. He will not by any means recall the gift of freedom which He has bestowed, but He retains the right to strengthen by additional bonds the connection between human beings and Himself. All down through the ages God has provided suggestions of the way in which men may return to Him, and the revelation of Himself which the prophets brought to men has culminated in the Christ who came in the fullness of time. Men had forgotten their divine origin, and the world had become full of evil and of misery, and so it was necessary that the love of God should manifest itself once more and prove the divine more potent than all the pain and the sorrow and the evil. The divine love had to come to the rescue of human life, not in theory only but in fact. The pain and evil of the world were not for Christ objects of thought only, but were the intensest elements of a personal experience. He had full consciousness of the misery of the world, but at the same time an unquenchable optimism, divine in its origin, whereby He could overwhelm the forces of despair and transform them into the strength of victory. Christ came not to think evil out of existence, but to show to men how it could be conquered in the world and in their own lives; more, He came to show them how it actually was conquered in the life of holiness and the death of sacrifice of the ideal man who was also the Son of

God. And, having been conquered in Christ, it could, through Christ, be conquered in humanity. What was possible in Christ, the elder brother of the race, could also be accomplished in His brethren of mankind. What He had won they also might win; where He had gone they also might go. Sin was no longer to be an impassable barrier between men and God. Christ had taken upon Himself the burden of the sorrow of sin and had returned through that sorrow to union with God. And in every human heart in which that divine sorrow should also be awakened there might also be peace and a consciousness of a renewed communion with God. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Christ the love of God streams forth to the utmost confines of humanity, giving to every man the power to return and become a son of God in the fullest sense, holding out the promise of abundance of life in complete harmony and communion with God.

A little symbolism may make the meaning clearer. God might be represented as the centre of a circle, and humanity as an outer circle of ever-widening circumference. In the course of the ages the lines which run from the centre to the circumference have grown faint. So in the power of the life and death of Christ God has, as it were, described an inner circle. Between the centre in God and the circumference of this inner circle the lines of connection are clear; from the centre we may pass easily to the circumference and back again to the centre. And the hope that is set before us is this, that the same closeness of connection which exists between the centre and the circumference of the inner circle will be found in the outer circle as well; and in love, reverence, and trust, we, with the lines of our connection with God passing ever

through the inner circle, shall attain to fullness of life and completeness of communion with God.

Christianity completes the negative teaching of Eastern Pantheism. It is fully conscious of the sorrow and evil of the world, and seeks to escape from their power. But it becomes positive as well, and more positive than negative. It finds salvation not in escape from the world, but in victory over it, not in the destruction of the powers of humanity but in development of them, not in absorption in God but in communion and co-operation with Him. It will use the intellect in its search after God, but it will seek to use it with a due observance of the conditions of knowledge. And if there should seem to be danger of abstraction in the contribution of the intellect, it will supplement this by devotion and character. Taking human personality as a guide, it continues in its search until it finds God also as Person. And if the Christian thinker is in earnest in his search, he finds that he has not to go all the way in the power of his own spirit. God is also seeking for him and even following him in his wanderings, drawing near to him in the person of the Eternal Son. And so God is no longer abstract, cold, intelligible merely, or unintelligible. The mystical Pantheist, in his search after God, withdraws from the world and finds himself in loneliness and in silence, but the Christian Theist goes to meet the Father of the Christ who has walked in the ways of men. And with the Christ who has loved and ever loves humanity a fullness of communion is possible which cannot be described by the intellect, but may be experienced in heart and life. In the intensity with which the Christian mystic realizes the presence of God he fulfils the ancient ideal of the Upanishads of the union of the Ātman and Brahman. But he goes far beyond

this ideal, for into the union which he seeks with God are brought, in his aspiration, all the riches of the being of both God and man. It is in the fullness of his humanity that man comes nearest God, and it is in the fullness of His Divinity that God comes nearest man. The meeting-place is Christ. As in our search after God we retire from the world of our every day into the mystery and the silence of our souls, we see the vision of the face of Christ and hear His voice; and as we gaze more earnestly and listen more intensely, we discover that we are looking upon the face of God and hearkening to the voice of the Eternal.

When we try to state this, which seems to be the highest conception at once of philosophy and religion, in the colder language of philosophy, we might say that the Christian conception seems to bring to effectiveness the fundamental lesson of Theism in general. This lesson we take to be the union of transcendence and immanence. We have learnt from Pantheism the lesson of immanence, but we have found that, unless we can learn more than this, we have no secure basis of life. We need something eternal, a world of spiritual values above the world of mere temporal process. The crux of the matter in human life seems to be how we are to unite the two, how we are to translate eternity into time. Pagan religionists sought sometimes to meet the double demand by two orders of gods, the gods of Olympic calm who remain beyond the world in the peace of attainment and the gods who come nearer humanity and enter into the conflicts of men. Eastern Pantheists have also sought to meet the double demand, but the method taken has been to deny that the demand need ultimately be double. They separated God from the temporal process, made Him independent of time, and then

denied that there was really any temporal process in which His manifestation might be sought.

We cannot in modern days accept this denial of the temporal, and so we are face to face once again with the constantly recurring difficulty of reconciling, or at least relating, the eternal and the temporal. We have hardly been able to avoid statements which involve us in difficulty. We have spoken of God as both the source and end of the world. But if this is so, then it would appear that He is at the end simply what He was at the beginning, and thus He would seem to be out of time, and time would have no real meaning for Him. Our difficulty is, we think, rendered more acute by the fact that when we feel constrained, and rightly constrained, to attribute eternity to God, we think of eternity still only in terms of time, if the seeming contradiction may be allowed. We think of it, i.e. as a *totum simul*, as comprising in itself past, present, and future. If God is eternal in this sense, He must gather up the temporal process in Himself. The future is already present to Him, in all its completeness of detail, and thus the temporal process loses all its meaning. It is just the unfolding of the already determined, and seems a futile repetition of that which is already done. Further, it absorbs in a philosophy of absoluteness both ourselves and our free activity and all the worth of our personality. This is the conception of eternity which has intellectually laid hold of Pantheism, and we have seen reason to fear its results as shown in quietism, conservatism, and denial of progress. And yet it is so difficult to get away from it. So long as we conceive of eternity as time crushed together, then the completeness of detail, which human beings can see only in the course of the unfolding of the temporal process, would seem all to be part of the being of God. To

deny that God has already determined the future appears then as a diminishing of the reality of God. On the other hand, if we allow that all is completely determined we diminish the reality of man.

Is it possible to gain some hint of another meaning of eternity ? Some time ago we spoke of lastingness as a test of value. May we think of eternity as a mode in which we express value ? When we speak of God as eternal, the core of our meaning is that we look upon God as the absolutely valuable. We increase the value of things in ordinary life when we lift them above the temporal level, when we secure them from the ravages of time. Note that this conception of value is not of something which has never been in time, but of something which, having been in time, is then raised to a higher level, the process of time having made its contribution to the value. But if the home of value is really in a realm raised above the temporal process to which, nevertheless, the temporal process makes its contribution, then we need not demand that the temporal process should be at any given moment completed before we can speak of Absolute Value. If, then, we identify God with Absolute Value, we do not diminish that value by thinking of temporal process as not yet completed, even for God. We need not embarrass the situation by thinking of future time as requiring to be already dealt with and included in the being of God before we can form an adequate conception of God as representing Absolute Value.

The way would thus seem to be clearer for bringing God into the temporal process without diminishing the reality of God. We may, without irreverence, think of God as Himself evolving, differentiating Himself according to the laws of organic growth, but with far greater specification. It is only thus that we can get a place of irreducible

value for human personality. We may regard God as entering into the world of time through the creation of human personalities, whose freedom He will not retract. He is the original source, and with the character of this source we have seen reason to associate the faith that the impulse which He has set in the world is an impulse towards goodness. Still, it is an *impulse*, and not a control so complete as to render human beings mere puppets in the hands of God. The worth of each individual is conserved.

This worth can be conserved only if the being of God is expanded through the very conditions, relative to human freedom, which He has laid upon Himself, if God Himself develops *as* He differentiates Himself in the souls of men. The dilemma is this. Human souls are worthless, or they have worth, only as they enter into the being of God. Our whole study has led us to the conviction that the worth of the human soul must at all costs be conserved. Pantheism would tell us that if we insist on this we are adopting an irreligious position unless we are at the same time willing to identify the human soul and the divine. We do not see that this conclusion is necessary. We may distinguish two phases in the being of God—the phase of the central impulse, the potentiality of the whole, and the phase of the consummation which we dimly foreshadow by saying that God will be all in all, having gained infinite expansion through the human lives which, in fulfilling their own vocation, have discovered that they also are divine. At present we are in the midst of the process of development, and our position is under the control, on the one hand, of the care of God, and on the other of our own answering activity. In worship and service we express our sense of the double relation. In

co-operation we work, our aim being to establish more and more of meaning and of value in the realm of the temporal. Thus the contribution of the temporal will be transmuted into an eternal spiritual possession. Our effort will be to make this transmutation more and more complete, and the working of God upon our souls and in history will be the constant supplying of new energy for this transmutation. The end will be the kingdom of God, the realm of the completely triumphant spiritual, and into this kingdom we shall bring all that we have truly won in the temporal struggle, and shall find our places as free personalities, each one of us discovering in the kingdom of God the kingdom of his own spirit.

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